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A LAST MEMORY OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

FROM THE 'MEMORIAL OF A TOUR,' BY OWEN
BLAYNEY COLE.

FOREWORD.

My father, Owen Blayney Cole, was born in 1808, and died 1886. He was educated at the Charterhouse, and afterwards at Christ Church. At the Charterhouse he had Thackeray as schoolfellow—and fag, till one day the future novelist, who was a much bigger boy than my father, became restive and turned on his 'master' and rent him! Still, it is not everyone who can boast that violent hands were laid on him by the author of 'Esmond.' Later, Gladstone was with Cole at Oxford, where a friendship sprang up between them which ended only with my father's death; even though this friendship necessarily had to become, in time, rather intermittent in character. For, whereas Gladstone developed into a great statesman and much-occupied man, my father led for many years almost the life of a recluse. Yet Gladstone never forgot his old fellow-undergraduate, and one of his last books, if not the last, he sent him was his illuminating 'Homeric Synchronisms.' It may be mentioned that while they were at Oxford a small club was formed among a certain few and christened the 'Weg Club' (W.E.G.), Gladstone of course being a prominent member—possibly founder. It was at Cole's and his brother's joint rooms (which by reason of their joint occupancy were larger than most) the coterie met. When in due course Owen Cole married (Lady Fanny Monck), Gladstone honoured him by becoming one of the trustees under the marriage settlements. Among the most highly-prized treasures in our family are the many letters Gladstone wrote to him while quite a young man.

BLAYNEY OWEN COLE.

The first of the Abbotsford family with whom I became
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acquainted was Miss Anne Scott, to whom I was presented by my travelling companion and friend, A.F., at an assembly, given by the Garniers, at Naples, to which all the élite were invited. This was in the spring of 1832. On being told how extremely desirous I was to be introduced to her illustrious father, Miss Scott smiled, then saddened when the cholera, so prevalent at the time, was alluded to. In the saloon of the Palazzo Garnier were more than a hundred guests of various nationalities, style, and rank—counts, marchesas, and be-diamonded dowagers, many of them with musical Italian names. On a raised platform at the other end of the room were Lady Strahan and her lovely daughters, one of them soon after married to a Polish prince. Miss Scott and her party sat in a sort of alcove, or overarched recess, half-way up the room ; it was there I was presented to her. In an ante-chamber was the Marquis of Hertford,¹ seated at whist, his well-developed leg graced with the Garter and gallant motto, on his breast the star. Lord Hertford, who was said to resemble George IV., was rubicund, with white forehead and an expression of good humour. He was guardian to the Miss Strahans, they were his 'wards' ; their almost equally beautiful mother, who was in her autumnal bloom, was his 're-ward.'

A few evenings later, at their conversazione, I found myself in the company of the Scottish Minstrel. He wore his Caledonian Club dress, one that became his bulky form, though it gave him more of a baronial than a literary appearance ; none would have mistaken him for an author, though many might set him down as a gentleman farmer. He was seated helplessly, if not quite listlessly, in an elbow chair, reminding me of Mr. Sommerville, in the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, the kind friend who, in the days of his better health, had assisted Crystal Croftangry in his seclusion within the bounds of Holyrood with legal advice. By the side of Sir Walter, in a wheel-chair, was Sir William Gell, with lower limbs paralysed, like those of Sir Walter. No two persons could otherwise be more dissimilar than the knight and baronet. Sir William Gell, the polished courtier, classical topographer and foreign habitué, with features moulded as from Parian marble, seemed Eurystheus by the side of Hercules.² Every now and then a volcanic laugh suggested Vesuvius—these raucous sounds would

¹ This was the third Marquis.

² 'I leave topography to classic Gell,' wrote Byron in *English Bards*, at the last moment substituting 'classic' for 'coxcomb' which he had written before making Gell's acquaintance.

follow after some bon mot of Gell's, whose cold blue eyes and curvilinear lip would imply sarcasm. It needed little to fire the train ; something that Sir William said about old Lady Westmoreland and the Prince of Capua occasioned one of these explosive bursts.

Sir Walter had sailed from England in the *Barham*, commanded by Captain Pigott, a cousin of A.F.'s.¹ After praising Captain P., Sir Walter began to recite Allan Cunningham's 'Sea Song,' following the cadence with his paralytic hand. He said that Allan Cunningham had been Chantrey's foreman, and wielded the mallet as successfully as the style. Sir William Gell spoke of Charles Mathews and his international dinner imitations : the English less noisy at their meals than the Dutch, the French less noisy than the Spaniard, the Italian subdued by the presence of his '*altrui sposa*.' To a Russian lady who spoke of 'Count Robert of Paris,' he exclaimed 'Don't read "Count Robert of Paris" ; it's not worth reading.' Then pointing to the table, where was an Italian version of the 'Lady of the Lake,' beautifully bound, he asked her had she seen that little book ? Having compared Sir Walter to a gentleman farmer as to his exterior, it must be allowed that his demeanour was sometimes the reverse of refined. To a young diplomatist present, who tried to make Miss Scott promise to ride with him in the Campagna, after their return to Rome, Sir Walter almost shouted 'No, you shan't ride with her !' Having thus unhorsed the too-aspiring knight-adventurer, he continued for some time silent, except when aroused by some pithy remark of Gell's. Miss Anne Scott, who made herself agreeable to every guest, thus compensating for her father's occasional rudeness, then opening her album, displayed a water-colour drawing, saying it was by Lord Castlereagh ; whereupon a personage, whom I mistook before for the family physician in attendance, left the corner of the room where he had been installed all the previous evening, and stepping forward, drawled forth 'Only a daub—just because a lord painted it you think it right to praise it—quite a mistake !' To divert this attack, his sister Anne (for the Diogenes in the corner was Mr. Charles Scott) sent her brother for eau-de-Cologne, complaining of headache. There was a something granitic in the father's roughness, which degenerated into what rather resembled slang in the son. Mr. Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton, then at Naples, declared Sir Walter was a mountain of a man, and a very rugged one, too ; he could not make him out—at one time

¹ A.F. is probably Augustus FitzRoy, a close friend of the writer's.

he talked like a boor, without even the semblance of authorship of the commonest kind ; again, he would for a moment or more be the Scotch Shakespeare. Yet there was gentleness in his smile, though from the morbid state of his lips, less of such than formerly.

It was sad to witness his helplessness : while trying to get at his pocket-handkerchief he would grope with his large lame hand for many long minutes in vain, succeeding after a desperate struggle with his infirmities. No one ventured to interpose ; for my part, pained as I was by the spectacle, I would as soon have interfered with the workings of an engine. It was after one of these trials of strength that he arose from his seat, and, hobbling across the floor, placed himself under the architrave between the two rooms of which his apartment consisted, one being half the size of the other. Between the folding doors he stood, propped on his staff, wearing his club suit, blue coat with thistle buttons and tweed trousers, the monument of himself. In the larger room was a gay company, consisting of guests of various speech and degree, all intent upon him ; and his two younger children, Charles and Anne—how soon to follow him ! In the smaller room were emptiness, silence, and solitude. He must have stood there for a quarter of an hour. Such a picture has seldom been witnessed ! Has any present there since painted it ? Failing such memento, let this faint sketch serve as a shadow of what was memorable almost as an eclipse. When taking leave as when we were first presented, Sir Walter extended his hand, saying to each, 'Good-bye, sir,' or 'ma'am.'

The next time that I saw Sir Walter was at Rome, the occasion Easter Day. He was seated on the roof of one of the twin colonnades in the Piazza di San Pietro to receive the Papal blessing—*Urbi et Orbi*. Amid the crowd of heads ranged along the portico on the right as you face the Basilica, that of the bard-baronet was most conspicuous from below. His visage, now altered by time or rather by suffering, showed to greater advantage at a distance ; and his countenance like the sun beamed forth, when, after a short period of expectation, Gregory XVI. came forward to a window or arched recess in front of St. Peter's with his hands full of indulgences, which were eagerly scrambled for by the populace below. To the left of His Holiness was one whose leaves, profane as strict Catholics might consider them in comparison with the Papal blessings, were more widely distributed. Both were aged men,

however dissimilar their physiognomy, resembling in this that both inclined to corpulence, the Papal features being almost bloated : both occupied the highest place : one conventionally by the votes of the College of Cardinals, the other by universal acclamation. Sir Walter's eldest son, Major Scott, the second and last baronet, was at Rome during the carnival but was seldom visible, at least to me. He asked a friend of mine if there was any 'play' at Rome, being, like Mowbray in 'St. Ronan's Well,' rather an adept at the gaming table. Major Scott was an officer in the 11th Hussars, of which Lord Cardigan was the colonel ; and he is said to have attracted the observation of His Majesty George IV. by his admirable equestrian grace at a review.

It was at Venice that I next came into near neighbourhood with the Scotts. We, that is, F. and I, unknowing of their arrival, installed ourselves in the Leone Bianco, in apartments opposite theirs, facing the Grand Canal, and not very far from the Rialto. Soon after their arrival in the city of St. Mark and the Wingéd Lion and Byron, Sir Walter embarked in one of those funereal-looking but really pleasant aquatic conveyances, a gondola, and steered for Lord Byron's former abode, the Palazzo Mocenigo, which was not far distant from the Leone Bianco, and one of the many palazzos that exist only amid the Stones of Venice. There was a delightful radiancy in his countenance, as Sir Walter stepped from the hotel into the beakéd boat, which seemed conscious of the unusual burden ; his daughter Anne accompanied him, Charles only assisting on the steps at the water's edge. Sir Walter might well be jealous as to his daughter Anne ; she was very pretty, with good eyes, clear colour, dark brown hair, and tall figure ; her smile was kindly, though perhaps less gay than in happier hours, if such she ever enjoyed after the commencement of their pecuniary difficulties. There was little or nothing of the parental Doric in her accent, still less of the maternal Aeolic, for be it remembered that her mother, *née* Charpentier, was of Irish extraction. At Naples, where I saw Miss Scott by the side of the two lovely Ricardos, as one of the three roses, she seemed the fairest of the three, the charm resulting chiefly if not solely from association. By some she was reproached with peevishness, as was her sire with roughness ; but if Miss Scott complained, it was in a strain of sublimity, as when the King of Naples refused her father's request for as much earth as would grow a slip of cypress. There were Scotch people at Naples—Glasgow or Greenock bodies, who tried to undervalue

their illustrious compatriot, speaking of the Laird of Abbotsford as one of those self-made men who would have done better to have kept their place. Those who remember the conversation of the gossips collected at the 'Golden Nag' to witness the Porteous execution will appreciate such remarks :

'Woman,' said Saddletree to his helpmate, 'd'ye think I was born to sit here brogging an elshin through bend leather, when sic men as Duncan Forbes and that other Arniston chield there, without muckle greater parts, if the close-head speak true, than myself, maun be presidents¹ and king's advocates, nae doubt, and wha but they ? Whereas if favour were equally distributed, as in the days of Wight Wallace——'

Of his daughter Sophia (Mrs. Lockhart), Sir Walter was equally fond and even more proud ; yet in his last illness a few days or hours before the close, he would, during his Lear-like ravings, imagine himself a criminal judge condemning his afflicted daughters to death, or penal servitude, or transportation. This is related by his faithful friend, factor, and amanuensis, Mr. William Laidlaw, who was waiting near at the door of Abbotsford on June 18, 1832, three months later than my meeting with the illustrious sufferer at Venice.

From the Leone Bianco we followed the Scotts to Terra Firma, as the opposite landing-place is named. Without being quite aware of their departure, our gondola gaining on their more heavily weighted one, we touched the shore soon after them. At the Dogana, then a mere change-house, now, I believe, a railway station, Sir Walter might be again accosted while the horses were being got ready and the boxes searched and repacked. Seated on an upturned barrel he imbibed the intense radiance of the midday sun, as once, lang syne, the warmth of the blazing faggots in the ingle-neuk at Kelso ; and as I approached him, his open hand was extended towards me with a courteous 'How do you do, sir ?' He did not recollect me, but that did not in the least detract from the genial urbanity of his greeting. Upon my mentioning that I had been at the bank at Venice,² and that the financial folk there were inclined to lament with Byron over the 'Dogeless city's

¹ Duncan Forbes of Culloden was President of the Supreme Courts in 1732, and is commemorated by a statue from the hand of Roubiliac. Dundas of Arniston flourished at the same time and in the same forensic sphere.

² This was the first European bank, being established towards the close of the Twelfth Century.

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vanish'd sway,' Sir Walter replied that it is the habit with bankers to depreciate the market so that they may buy their stock cheap and sell with advantage. Then, as if inspired by the genius of the soil, with Venetian *estro* he predicted a future for the 'Sea Cybele'; the Bucentaur would be again launched from the Arsenal; the Adriatic would be no more spouseless, but would again embrace his bride. The great Sennachie was reversing the order of events, so that by his spell the glories of the past were visible in the confronting mirror of the present time; his words were like the beams of the setting sun, struggling with the western cloud and kindling the horizon with remote splendour. Perhaps, like Byron, he thought it right, feeble as he now was, to break a lance on behalf of 'beautiful Venice.' What says Childe Harold ?

'Venice, if no stronger claim were thine—
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memories of the bard divine—
Thy love of Tasso should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations,—most of all,
Albion, to thee: the ocean-queen should not
Abandon ocean's children—in the fall
Of Venice, think of thine, despite thy watery wall.'

Fearing further to intrude, I repaired to the stables, where was Mr. Charles Scott, who, pointing sneeringly to the post-horses, said that they answered to the name of 'Vermin.' From Venice to Vicenza our carriage followed the Scotts at a little distance, never quite losing sight of them, except during the awful thunderstorm by which we were surprised half way. The sun, that shone as for Paul Veronese or Titian at the Dogana, became suddenly obscured by vapours; and we were presently in the thick of the storm—flash after flash, and such thunder as is fulminated only in Italy. It was about the time of the evening prayer and the Angelus chime; but the bells in the church towers were heard at intervals only, like Mercy pleading with Wrath. After the lightning came a 'Lava,' or downfall of rain, by which the postilion seemed blinded. What if he were washed off the saddle!—some such apprehension was uppermost in my mind. There is that in heavy rain which prevents the imagination from soaring, otherwise I might have heard voices like that of Norna of the Fitful Head proclaiming the transit of the Wizard of the North.

At Vicenza we stopped for the night, having, during the thunder-storm, passed near the ruins of the castle of the Montecchi, sad enough even in the sunshine, dolorous indeed in such weather. Soon after arriving at the albergo, to my extreme delight there came an impromptu invitation from the Scotts, who were seated at the tea-table, just where I should most desire to find them. Sir Walter was in excellent spirits ; Miss Anne as fresh as a rose just washed by the shower ; Charles in his very best humour. Hitherto I had never seen the 'Lion' at any of his meals : how great was my gratification at being permitted to help him to the loaf ! More than one substantial slice of bread and butter did I manufacture for him ; and then, *exceptis excipiendis*, ensued something like a realisation of the evening party at the Castle of Branksome :

' When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride,
And he began to talk anon.'

His theme, if not exactly the same, was not far from being so ; for if it was of the existing Buccleuchs he spoke—not ' of Earl Francis, dead and gone ' ; he told how he would have been present at the christening of Lord Dalkeith, which took place only last year, but for his infirmities and the Reform agitation. The son and heir of his chief was born at Montague House, where was a large gathering of the Scotts to welcome the little Christian after baptism. Sir Walter evidently regretted not having been able to see the head of the clan, ' with his tail on,' as Waverley saw Vich Ian Vohr. He invited me and my fellow-traveller to Abbotsford, where, he said, he indulged himself in the national vanity of a piper. He spoke of Scotch music, which was lively or the reverse, as exemplified by the air so martial as ' Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' and so pathetic as ' I'm wearin' awa' to the Land o' the Leal.' He had no knowledge himself of music, but liked to listen to his daughter Sophia (Mrs. Lockhart). To my friend F. he spoke of his having been challenged to fight a duel by a French General, on account of his ' Life of Napoleon ' ; this was evidently a joke, as was his having had a pressing invitation to New York from an American lady, to whose proposal he was obliged to give a flat refusal ; ' and yet,' he added, with infinite humour, ' none can accuse me of want of gallantry, having in my time done so much for women.'

I told him of my having, the year before, made one of an

excursion party to the Scotch isles, and how, starting from London-derry, whither I went from the Giant's Causeway, I visited Staffa and Iona, steaming through the Sound of Mull, where our keel scraped a sunk rock. Before getting into the Cave of Strathard, in the Isle of Skye, we had a little encounter with the Macdougals, to whom the key of the stalactite palace of right belonged. Of this I made the most, telling how, headed by the Marquis of Waterford and Lord Alford, we gained our point, and were all admitted on payment of a single guinea-piece, though not before the son of Archdeacon Monsell had a tooth chipped by the butt end of a fowling-piece belonging to one of his friends. When I said that the ladies of the party had some difficulty in scrambling up the incline within the mouth of the cavern, he declared that women must crawl before they can fly. The companion of my tour, I said, was a clergyman named Heath, a son or nephew of the Eton scholar and critic, and that he took snuff when the ship was unpleasant.

To this and much more he listened ; but when I returned to the Cave of Strathard he stopped me by saying that instead of grovelling in the dark, I should have climbed the cliffs beyond and continued my path until I arrived at a hollow among the hills where the rocks are riven, shattered, blasted, ruined. At this moment there was more of sadness than scorn in his countenance, enough to convince me, had I known the localities then as now, that he was wandering in imagination away to his own Rhymer's Glen, and onwards to the solitudes of Cauldshiels Loch.

All this time Miss Anne was conversing with F. ; they both knew the same people in London. Mr. Charles joined but seldom in the conversation ; as for me, I was entirely preoccupied by the Minstrel. Suddenly, while her father was half way through a sentence, still stumbling amid his native hills and hollows, Miss Scott arose and beckoned to her father, who, assisted by his son, struggled to his legs ; then the three Scotts stood before the open door, and Sir Walter, slightly bowing, said, ' You are——' there he ceased, as though unable or unwilling to complete the sentence. What is it he would have added more ? Was it ' You are entering upon life ; I am nearing the goal ! ' or ' You are idlers and have made me talk too much ! ' Was it not, rather, ' You are heartily welcome to whatever entertainment has been afforded you this evening or heretofore by the author of " Tales of my Landlord " ! ' I should, perhaps, mention that one of his guests at the tea-table at Vicenza was a lineal descendant of the royal Stuart.

At Verona I beheld Sir Walter for the last time ; he was seated in his open carriage in front of the hotel, waiting for horses and the revision of his passport, and seemed thoroughly to enjoy the sunshine, now less sultry, though almost as warm as at the Dogana, on *Terra Firma*. Above, in the balcony, casting gentle glances were not Juliet and her nurse, but one of the Bavarian princesses and her aunt or *gouvernante*, both of whom I had encountered six weeks before in the outer crater of Vesuvius, where they seemed *perdues*, having been deserted by the gentlemen of their party, including the Crown Prince of Bavaria. We had been asked by Leigh, formerly of Vienna, to join the cavalcade, or donkey troop rather, and afterwards to a hasty repast at the Hermitage. We descended the burning mountain just at nightfall, when the scene reminded me of the Sixth Aeneid :

‘Vidi et crudeles dantem Salmonea poenas
Dum flamas Iovis et sonitus imitatur Olympi.’

(‘The raging fuel shot upwards from the quaking entrails of the volcano seemed to hurl defiance at Jove and his thunder-bolts, while the lava stream, issuing from the wounded side of the yet unconquered giant, became blood-red amid the surrounding gloom.’)

The royal Bavarian ladies were now in far better humour than when in such close proximity with the angry Titans, especially the younger princess, whose smile was all gentleness, with less of hauteur than formerly ; but it was not of royalty I mused, but of our immortal host of the previous night. Sir Walter, on my going up to the side door of his britzka, again greeted me with open palm and slow syllabic, ‘How do you do, sir ?’ which, however gracious, did not quite imply actual identification. On my informing him of my intention to explore the abode of the haughty Capulets, the site where Juliet had taught Romeo

‘With Love’s light wings to overperch the walls
So hard, and high to climb, and the place death
Considering who he was’ ;

and that I also meant to hunt up the tomb of Juliet at the Franciscan Convent, he replied, ‘Don’t go and see Juliet’s tomb at the Franciscan Convent,¹ but go instead to the Church of Santa

¹ ‘The old palace of the Capulets,’ writes Lord Byron to Murray from Venice, ‘with its uncouth balcony and irregular windows, is still standing in a lane near the market-place. Juliet’s tomb is a decayed sarcophagus, with withered leaves inside, in a wild conventual garden, once a cemetery, now ruinous to the very graves.’

Maria l'Antica, in front of which stands the stately monument of the Scaligers—go to that, not to the other.' Anxious, mere juvenile as I was, to appear capable of appreciating his advice, I inquired learnedly, yet diffidently, if the celebrated critic belonged to the family of the noble Scaligers. He said he certainly did belong to them ; and to prove it, began to quote from one of the works of the scholar Scaliger. While referring to the book, he seemed to be reading from some huge vellum-bound tome lying open before him, so tenacious was his memory, even then, for what had been hoarded up there in former years. Like Lovel in the sanctum of Mr. Oldbuck, at Monk barns, wondered I at the author of the 'Antiquary.' I could almost hear the voice of the imaginary possessor of the library while exulting over his literary spoils : ' Even I, sir,' he went on, ' though far inferior to that great man (Davie Wilson, alias Snuffy Davie) in discernment and presence of mind, can show you a few, a very few things which I have collected, not by force of money, only to illustrate my own ignorance, as my friend Lucian might say, but gained in a manner showing that I know something of the matter. See this bundle of ballads, not one of them later than 1700, many of them a hundred and more years older. These little Elzevirs are the trophies of many a walk by night and morning through the Cowgate, the Canongate, the Bow, St. Mary's Wynd. Then, to dazzle the eyes of wealthier rivals, by showing such a treasure as this (displaying a little black, smoked book, about the size of a primer) ; to enjoy their surprise and envy, shrouding meanwhile under a veil of mystery our own superior knowledge and dexterity—these, my young friend, these are the white moments of life that repay the toil and pains and sedulous attention which our profession, above all others, so peculiarly demands.'

This was my last sight of Sir Walter Scott, the tomb of the Scaligers, the last topic of conversation.¹

' Omnes eodem cogimur, omnium
Versatur urna.'

¹ Sir Walter Scott died a few months later, on Sept. 21, 1832.

LUIGI PIRANDELLO.

Do or say what we will, the English Channel remains an obstacle to the easy interflow of thought between this country and the Continent. In the matter of literature this is obvious to anybody who tries to keep abreast of what is published in any of the chief countries of Europe. Now and then, for varying reasons, a reputation leaps quickly over the barrier: the recognition of Marcel Proust of D'Annunzio, and of Ibañez are instances of comparatively recent penetrations. But, taking our interests all in all, they are insular. Not only from the conversation of cultivated men and women, but from periodicals and reviews there is absent a real curiosity about the minds of our continental neighbours. We wait contentedly, in the conviction that work of any permanent value will filter through in the end, thanks to the persistence of some translator and the enterprise of some publisher. The consequence is that we often have to wait a long time, and we should have to wait longer, in many cases, were it not for literary enterprise in America. The literary productions of the United States are not all admirable, but we certainly have to thank them—and they have to thank their large population of European descent—for many translations of leading continental authors. The industry of translation, albeit a little over-commercialised, flourishes in America, and we in England reap the benefit.

We are now about to reap the benefit of an American publisher's enterprise which will introduce to those who cannot read Italian one of the most original writers of modern Italy, Luigi Pirandello. This vivacious Sicilian has been writing for some thirty years, it is true, but I believe that, even in Italy, it is only recently that his reputation has come unmistakably to the front, and this, very largely, owing to the success of his plays. Pirandello is now a popular dramatist: yet he has written short stories enough to fill twenty-four volumes containing fifteen stories each, besides a few novels, in addition to his many plays. The firm of Bemporad in Florence is bringing out this new edition of short stories, and up to the present five of the twenty-four volumes, under the title of 'Novelle per un Anno,' have appeared. The same firm has issued a new edition of his best novel, 'Il Fu Mattia Pascal,' and several

of the plays, including the one which last year brought the name of Pirandello to the notice of a few English people. The strikingly fantastic drama *Sei Personaggi in cerca d'Autore* (Six Characters in search of an Author) was performed once, with brilliant success, by the Stage Society. Some of Pirandello's plays will be included in the first volumes of the translation to be published by Messrs. Dutton, and they will reveal to those who do not yet know him an author whose acquaintance is well worth making. The work of this author, however, cannot be properly judged from his plays alone, for if they bring into relief one of his most striking gifts—the power of presenting vivid dramatic situations—they also emphasise one of his chief faults—his shallow view of life and his almost algebraical attitude to the problems he propounds. Too often these vivid situations have unsound foundations, so that admiration of the fertile ingenuity that makes their presentation so effective is tempered by the conviction that what we are observing is not a criticism of life but a shadow play or, at worst, a kind of intellectual Grand Guignol.

A critic, with the great literature of the world in his mind, cannot praise unreservedly the work of Pirandello. It is the more important, therefore, to appreciate his merits justly. His chief merit, perhaps, is his inexhaustible vivacity in describing persons and scenes, and in presenting queer twists in ordinary human relations which bring about unexpected clashes. With all his facility, too, he does not rely upon the hackneyed stock-in-trade of our popular magazine-writers—lovers' hearts, mothers' tears, the struggle for commercial success, sensational adventure, the tracking of crime, or the morals of smart society. He has without effort kept his work on a higher plane, while losing nothing in the way of immediate appeal. Helped, no doubt, by his Latin temperament, he has never been scared by the bogey of other people's comfortable illusions, on no account to be disturbed: he goes too far, in fact, in the contrary direction. His characters are ordinary people like ourselves, moved by ordinary impulses and appetites; and he sees no necessity for dramatic purposes to transfigure them in the false light of a futile sentimentality. He does not worry himself, either, with intricate psychological paraphernalia from scientific text-books, which are becoming truly wearisome in the fiction of this country. His men and women, with all their quaintnesses of expression and habit, the oddities of their dress, their typical gestures and their pathetic blindness to the pitfalls

of existence, come to his consciousness with a remarkable spontaneity, their story—one might say—already hung round their necks. In one of his stories he writes :

‘ It has long been my custom, every Sunday morning, to give audience to the characters of my future stories. Five hours of it, from eight till one o’clock. It nearly always happens that I find myself in bad company. I do not know why, but there usually come to these audiences of mine the most discontented people in the world, or people afflicted by strange ills, or mixed up in the most remarkable sets of circumstances, people with whom it is really quite painful to deal.’

These words are not an exaggeration : all the work of Pirandello bears them out. He sees his fictitious characters as plainly as he sees flesh and blood. From this extraordinary immediacy of impression come his freshness and power of delineation : from it, too, comes his failure to penetrate beyond this first superficial reality and his willingness, in ironic contemplation of his ‘ bad company,’ to rest contented with an attitude to life of derisive scepticism which, at first diverting, shows up before long its essential poverty.

The best of Pirandello’s company, from an artistic point of view, is undoubtedly that which comes to him from rustic life : and in this he is not unique among Italian authors. Nobody can study Italian fiction for long without realising that the life of the village is its truest and strongest inspiration. Those charming *paesi* of Italy, with whitewashed walls and red-tiled roofs, nestling round a graceful campanile in every fold of the hills, whose picturesqueness awakes the admiration of every traveller, are—as every traveller does not realise—strongholds of national life. Landowning is a national occupation, not merely an industry. The cultivation of the vines, olives, and corn on the little *podere*, the preservation of its tenure, the disaster of its loss, the hope of adding to it by thrift, its importance in marriage and inheritance—these are matters in which nearly every Italian, at first or second hand, is vitally interested. Much of what is best and most sincere in the Italian nature grows from the soil of this rough, simple, and independent country life, with its comparatively primitive passions and humours. It is not of small significance that Manzoni began the action of ‘ *I Promessi Sposi* ’ in a village : he, like Walter Scott, knew instinctively upon what firm foundations the decorative

structure of romantic narrative must be raised if it is to be permanent. Giovanni Verga, again, whose finest work is assured of immortality, only reached his highest level when, as in that great novel 'I Malavoglia' and in the short stories which include 'Cavalleria Rusticana,' he drew from his inner memories the characters and passions of rustic men and women. It would seem, indeed, that Italian writers find it difficult to keep their critical equilibrium when they deal with the more artificial life of cities: they fall away so easily into sensationalism, sentimentalism, sham realism, or a kind of violent irony which bears witness to their subconscious impatience with a less natural mode of existence. Verga's novels of town life, such as 'Eva,' are pitiable when placed beside the profound sincerity and truth of 'I Malavoglia'; and, though Pirandello in his stories of country life has not reached the high level of his compatriot, they are free from the peculiar type of artificiality with which he invests the rather pitiful barristers, professors, civil servants, and middle-class characters in general who also besiege his study on Sunday mornings.

One of the best among Pirandello's short stories, 'Il Fumo,' is an admirable study of country life in Sicily, the action of which turns upon the inevitable damage wrought by the working of sulphur mines—Sicily's chief wealth—upon the vegetation of the neighbourhood; and the spiritual clash is between the land-love and land-hunger of a country proprietor and his hot desire for revenge. Don Mattia, the central figure, himself once a mine-owner ruined by the dishonesty of his own manager, has retired to a charming little estate upon a hill which still smiles in beauty outside the range of deadly sulphur fumes. The hill itself is rich in sulphur, but the proprietors who cultivate its slopes have steadily refused to sell their land, none more staunchly than Don Mattia. But Don Mattia covets the land of his next-door neighbour, a quaint old simpleton called Don Filippino who keeps a tame monkey and neglects to prune his trees. Don Filippino has verbally agreed that, for a consideration, his estate shall pass to Don Mattia at his death, and allows the latter, who cannot bear to see good land going to ruin, to expend time and money on tending the trees during his lifetime. But one night the monkey throttles his master in his sleep. Impoverished relations descend upon the estate. They would be quite willing to carry out the bargain, but that the estate is already mortgaged to a rich usurer, the very man who had ruined Don Mattia. The latter goes to visit his enemy, now a

loathsome old serpent whose spark of life is flickering out though his venom is still intact. At the interview, described with remarkable power, the usurer is obdurate : he will keep the estate himself. In a fury Don Mattia rushes out to the house of the chief mining engineer and offers him the coveted estate. He will brook no delay for legal formalities : ' Tie me up, tie me up,' he cries passionately, ' so that I can't go back ! ' In two days the business is finished : he has given up all that he loved best to the *fumo*, that his enemy may not enjoy it, and he returns sadly to the lovely hill and wanders up by its gnarled olive trees whose leaves will soon be shrivelled beyond recovery by the breath of the destroyer.

' — Distruzione ! Distruzione ! Nè io nè lui ! Brucino ! . . . E guardò attorno gli alberi, con la gola stretta d'angoscia : quegli olivi centenarii, dal grigio poderoso tronco stravolto, immobili, come assorti in un sogno misterioso nel chiarore lunare. Immaginò come tutte quelle foglie, ora vive, si sarebbero aggricciate ai primi fiati agri della zolfara, aperta li come una bocca d'inferno ; poi si sarebbero cadute ; poi gli alberi nudi si sarebbero anneriti, poi sarebbero morti, attossicati dal fumo dei forni. L'accetta, lì, allora. Legna da ardere, tutti quegli alberi. . . .

' Una brezza lieve si levò, salendo la luna. E allora le foglie di tutti quegli alberi, come se avessero sentito la loro condanna di morte, si scossero quasi in un brivido lungo, che si ripercosse su la schiena di don Mattia Scala, curvo su la giumenta bianca.'

In many other stories—in the tragedy of ' Scialle Nero,' in which a woman of good birth is forced, as the result of a momentary weakness, to marry a young bumpkin ; in the delicate sadness of ' Prima Notte,' which leaves the old cemetery-keeper and his young wife praying and weeping on the first night of their marriage, she at the grave of her shipwrecked father, he at the tomb of his first wife ; in the rather savage humour of ' La Cassa Riposta,' which might have come out of the ' Decameron ' ; in the anguish of ' Zia Michelina ' forced, against all her most intimate scruples, to marry her husband's nephew, she being a second wife and the inheritor of the property ; and in the pure comedy of ' Difesa di Méola,' where a certain Méola elopes with the bishop's hunch-backed daughter to save the district from an unwelcome visitation of certain bigoted friars—Pirandello exploits the inexhaustible vein of country passions and humours with a remarkable freshness and vivacity. His characters are not great, but they are striking and well observed ; and there is conveyed throughout a vivid

impression of active, varied, and pulsing human life rooted, like the vines and mulberries, in a rich soil. Moreover, when country life is his subject, Pirandello's humour has a spontaneity which contrasts advantageously with the weary pessimism of his reflections on middle-class life. He can draw to perfection such a scene as the interior of a country lawyer's office, grilling on a summer morning, with the clients sitting patiently round on the frowsy chairs, tormented by bluebottles and the teasing of the lawyer's odious little boy, or the inside of a local court, or a marriage ceremony, or the customers of a country inn ; and there is nothing stale and forced about his irony when, for instance, he narrates the comedy of a second husband's obsession by the example of his predecessor, even in infidelity, or the paradoxical pleading of a peasant that he was forced to kill his unfaithful wife because the wife of her betrayer, a man of substance, must needs make a fuss and bring into the open a matter which everybody had been comfortably ignoring. In passages of this kind Pirandello's lightness of touch and economy are admirable.

The other side, however, of Pirandello's work—the side which is in many ways most typical of his peculiar talent and which preponderates in his later stories and plays—is not so unexceptionable. The same skill and vivacity are there, more evident than ever : the faces and shapes of his characters are made remorselessly plain, and they act, or their minds act, with an almost disconcerting energy. This electrical power carries Pirandello a long way : it imposes itself upon the reader the first time, the second time, even the third. Such a story as 'Notizie del Mondo'—which purports to be written in a mocking vein to an old friend who is dead, reproofing him for getting married and regaling him with comic accounts of the narrator's relations with his widow—captures one with its extraordinary mixture of tenderness and cynicism ; and the swift and powerful study, in 'La Toccatina,' of damaged humanity clinging, childlike, to a few poor sweets of life that remain has in it an originality and a movement that are truly refreshing. But those who read on become conscious, sooner or later, of a disillusionment which, when it comes, throws a shadow over the first keen appreciation. The reader is forced to realise that, when he turns his eye upon the spectacle of middle-class civilisation, Pirandello no longer sees clear. It is not life as a whole that he sees, but a phantasmagoria, extremely vivid but devoid of any significance ; and from that phantasmagoria he draws a quasi-

philosophy which is often amusing, but always sour and shallow. In one of his stories a professor, who in a moment of exalted heroism had rescued a whole family during an earthquake, declaims *con brio* to the company in a railway carriage on the lifelong misery which this act had brought him—a complaining wife, a tiresome mother-in-law, a whole army of dependents, domestic discord, poverty, disgrace. Heroism, he exclaims—and one can see his expressive gestures—is but a sublime moment.

‘Life, unfortunately, is not made up of these rare moments. Ordinary life, the life of every day, you know what it is: where it is not stinking with misery, it bristles with obstacles, innumerable and often insuperable, it is tormented by continuous material needs, it is oppressed by mean cares and regulated by mediocre duties.’

And in another story, ‘La Trappola,’ which is a rhetorical harangue on the theme that human life is a trap, because every determined form of life is a corruption of life itself, his character says :

‘You cannot imagine the hate with which I am inspired by the things I see, caught with me in the trap of my time; all the things that end by dying with me, little by little! Hate and pity! But more hate, perhaps, than pity. It is true that, had I tumbled into the trap further on, I should then have hated that other form as I hate the present one and all the illusions of life, which we *dead of all time* fashion with that flicker of movement and heat that is shut up in us out of the continuous flux which is the true life and never stops. We are so many busy corpses creating for ourselves the illusion of life.’

There is only too much reason to believe that these are genuine sentiments of the author. Pirandello thinks ‘meanly of the soul,’ and we cannot accept his view of life as a ridiculous scurrying to and fro of miserable, foolish little creatures, tripping over one another and distracted by their own mean desires. There is a sense in which this view has truth, but it is not even partially true when it is an expression of blank discouragement or empty resignation. Only from the standpoint of a high faith or a profound philosophy is such a view permissible, and then it is transformed. Pirandello has neither faith nor philosophy, with the result that we are driven to reject his sorry masquerade of humanity as ingenious but unreal. We in England have a great author on whose mind the frequent futility of human effort has

indelibly burnt itself: but between Thomas Hardy, author of 'Life's Little Ironies' but also of 'The Dynasts,' and Luigi Pirandello there is a world of difference. To Hardy the universe is a great and marvellous fabric, into which the ironies fit, to be understood by the intelligences and mourned by the pities. He is a poet, and poets do not think meanly of the soul. He looks on life as from a hill. Pirandello stands at the street corner and looks at life hurrying along the pavement through a rather cranky pair of glasses, and the crankiness of his vision impairs the value of his creations. The life which he presents whirls passionately round, but without a principle, even of evil, to give it significance; and the emotions he would evoke lose their edge because they too, on his showing, are part of a senseless flux. He stifles the cry of passion in shrill but bitter argument and drowns the hint of a sigh in a hoot of derision. But the argument is abstract and the derision vain, for neither argument nor laughter carries in a void; and the drum of the showman who exhibits performing fleas can never be great music. By excluding every element of permanence from his conception of human life, Pirandello, with all his attractive gifts, his ingenuity and his dramatic sense, has banished the quality of greatness from his art. He cannot rise, since he has cut off his wings, and even his style has to remain at the street level: it is just a pungent stream of everyday conversation. Nor are these criticisms but the reaction of an alien mentality: a very acute young critic, G. B. Angioletti, wrote recently in *L'Esame*:

'Pirandello, che tenta la commedia umana senza il lieve romanticismo balzacchiano e senza l'acre naturalismo zoliano, senza idealismo e senza positivismo, Pirandello che non rifugge da alcuna complicazione dello spirito senza pertanto possedere una sua concezione dello spirito, ma una visione soltanto della vita reale, si trova costretto a dover correre su d'un binario predisposto ed obbligato, di cui una rotaia è la scontentezza per il mondo misero e stupido, e l'altra è l'assoluto bisogno di riprodurre la realtà, impedendosi così quei distacchi dalla terra o quegli scavi in profondità che fanno il grande narratore.'

Pirandello's limitations, as might be supposed, are least felt when his purpose is definitely fantastic, for one can then enjoy the lively movement, the quaint features, and the often exaggerated rhetoric of his characters without being obliged to measure their

depth and consistency by exacting standards ; and one can surrender oneself without uneasiness to his charm, as a man might pass from the street into some fantastic *cabaret* where a philosophic revue, illuminated by many brilliant approximations to subtle truths, might entertain him agreeably. For this reason Pirandello's novel, 'Il Fu Mattia Pascal,' is artistically the most satisfying of his works in fiction. Fantastic without being extravagant, it presents an illusion of reality sufficient to engage the imagination without deceiving the intelligence.

Mattia Pascal, son of a prosperous landowner in the village of Miragno, near Pisa, has grown up, after an idle and extravagant youth, to find himself completely impoverished. Penniless as he is, he has been landed by his rather cynical love affairs with a disagreeable wife and a *Megaera* of a mother-in-law. Only the miserably paid post of librarian keeps him from absolute want. One day, when he has been more than usually sick at heart, the chance gift of 500 lire enables him to escape from his squalid circumstances. He intends to go to America, but drifts instead to Monte Carlo, where, by gambling in a kind of blind frenzy, he wins in a few days 82,000 lire. He is on his way home with these spoils when he reads in a local paper an account of his own suicide, somebody's decomposed body having been fished out of the mill-stream and recognised as his. After the first shock he realises that he is now free indeed, and sets out, liberated from all the sordid trammels of the past, to fashion a new life under an assumed name of Adriano Meis. At first he enjoys the experience of being a phantom, but he finds in the event that, furnished only with a set of perfectly fictitious relations to the world, a human being is effectively debarred from any life at all. He has no position and no papers, he cannot risk the least inquiry into his past, he cannot rent a house or even be entered on the roll as holder of a dog-licence. His whole existence being a lie, he loses the very pleasure of lying. A vagrant existence having grown irksome, he settles down with a family at Rome. Here, in spite of himself, he becomes embroiled with life again. He wins the heart of a girl and incurs the enmity of her brother-in-law, who steals a large sum of his money. Yet he can neither marry the girl nor denounce the culprit to justice. He is insulted by a Spanish artist who slaps his face : without submitting to humiliating inquiries he cannot procure seconds to arrange an encounter. This is the last straw. Carefully staging a second suicide, he escapes into life once more

as Mattia Pascal, only to find his wife already furnished with a second husband and a child. We leave him settled in the house of an old servant, idling in the library where he was once employed and composing this memoir in mockery of life.

This summary of a very engaging tale does it small justice, for its incidents and the manner of its narration have a remarkable energy and originality. Yet it is interesting to note that the element of fantasy, to which much of the story's charm is due, is also its chief weakness. The one figure which has no solidity is the central one, Mattia Pascal himself. He remains in one's mind as a vague and backboneless person, almost inert, with a vein of intellectual buffoonery that has little counterpart in any exterior reactions. There is something impersonal about his reflections, and his actions are too few to give him a convincing personality. For the greater part of the book he is little more than a pair of spectacles, with a Pirandellian cast in them, through which to observe the oddities of life. But these oddities live. The first section of the book which describes the early days at Miragno is full of admirable things—the picture of the fat, dishonest manager, the inefficient tutor with his love for acrostics, the terrible widow Pescatore, Mattia's mother-in-law, and the scene where the decisive Aunt Scolastica rescues Mattia's mother from her clutches by smothering her in her own dough. The raciness of this prologue is really the best part of the story, for, when Mattia Pascal has escaped from these vivid realities, his narration sometimes declines into mere verbosity. The sketches of Monte Carlo, though lively in their way, are little better than clever journalism, and the story does not fully come to life again till the hero is settled in Rome. The odd interior of Signor Paleari's household is remarkably well drawn. The old father, wholly given up to morbid spiritualistic speculation, the mild and pathetic Adriana who keeps house, the middle-aged, sentimental Signorina Caporale, once a piano-teacher with a tendency to drown her sorrows in wine, the sinister rogue of a brother-in-law Papiano with his specious volubility, and the young epileptic brother are all combined into a drama of sustained comic interest—the kind of combination in which Pirandello excels. Yet even here he too often breaks the thread of his plot by those tirades on purely intellectual themes which thrill the author but dry up the emotions of his audience. One becomes veritably weary as old Signor Paleari drivels on—and it is the author speaking—about the illusion of life and the reality of death. But one

forgives these lapses when one is laughing at the richly comic scene of the spiritualistic *séance* in the hero's room, at which, while a sheet flaps and a tambourine jangles in the darkness, La Caporale gets a blow in the mouth, the Spanish artist kisses his young lady's cheek, Mattia Pascal's lips meet those of Adriana and the epileptic youth abstracts Mattia's money from the cupboard. After this climax the interest declines, though the author tries to whip up a little laughter over the scene where the resuscitated hero chaffs his wife and her second husband on their situation: but this scene is out of tune, since the sympathies are not with Mattia Pascal. He has no right to crow over anybody, and these outbursts of rather crude buffoonery are inartistic. However, it is an original and amusing tale, though its central figure, taken all in all, is only a personification of nullity.

The consideration of Pirandello's plays leads, though by a slightly different route, to similar conclusions. Pirandello has the reputation of being a humourist: indeed, it is his most usual designation. Some of his plays—*Liolà*, a comedy of Sicilian life, for instance, or the farcical *L'Uomo, La Bestia e La Virtù*—fully justify the attribution: but of others, and those the more important, the plot is certainly not humorous for the main characters concerned. Yet the designation of humourist may rightly be applied to this author—with a hint of reproof—even in his grimmer dramas. His 'umorismo,' which is not the same thing as humour, is his most striking quality, but he is apt to wear it as some headstrong knight might have worn a patch of gay silk where armour should have been. It attracts immediate attention, but it is an easy target in the tilt. He observes the characters of his plays through the same glasses as those of his stories, and over their antics he figuratively slaps his thigh and crows with ironic laughter. This attitude is obvious not only in the elaborate stage directions which sketch the whole physiognomy of each character, but still more in the easy vigour with which he slips minor characters of purely comic cast into an essentially tragic situation. Leaving on one side the *Sei Personaggi*, which is a masterpiece of 'umorismo,' one may cite the nerve specialist and the companions of the demented hero in the tragedy *Enrico IV*. Don Camillo Zonchi and the widow Naccheri, whose bickering so brilliantly opens *Come Prima Meglio di Prima*, the old father in *Se Non Costi*, and the vulgar old lady and her ridiculous son who intrude on the wedding party in the first act of *Tutto Per Bene*. The irresistible liveliness of these comic characters and

scenes is wholly admirable, but it is impossible not to realise the weak spot in Pirandello's 'umorismo': it is an attitude of derision, not of sympathy. The same posture of amused contempt for human futility which diverts but, in the long run, irritates the reader of his stories also disconcerts the spectator of his plays. He devises tragic conflicts, but displays them with a certain cold *bravura* which dissipates the appropriate emotions. The spectator is diverted, even thrilled, but—saving the power with which great actors can exalt imperfect creations—they feel neither pity nor fear. What else could be expected from an author who obviously despises his audience as much as he despises the rest of humanity? We have in Mr. Bernard Shaw, who is a greater dramatist than Pirandello, an instance of a similar attitude. Mr. Shaw throws his situations at the heads of his audience with the air of saying: 'There, digest that if you can!' But Mr. Shaw is intensely serious beneath his extravagant gestures, whereas it would seem that Pirandello has observed nothing in life worth being serious about. His Signora Morli in *La Signora Morli Uno e Due*, with her psychological fluctuation between a first and a second husband, Martino Lori in *Tutto Per Bene*, who discovers that for many years he has been acting the *mari complaisant*, unconsciously to himself, consciously in the eyes of his friends and his supposed daughter, and Fulvia Gelli, the wife in *Come Prima Meglio di Prima*, who, after a disorderly career and an attempted suicide, returns to her husband's house in the false guise of his second wife, are all impossible creatures, to see ourselves in whom is an intellectual effort. Their misfortunes are special cases depending on no general law of any value. Pirandello's attitude, I have suggested, may be called algebraical. In devising his dramatic situations he is a laughing mathematician constructing elegant equations with a set of ludicrous symbols; and he gives ground for the suspicion that it is only with such symbols that he can work at all.

In his very curious preface to the play *Se Non Così* Pirandello apologises to the character which would naturally be played by the leading lady for so contriving her final and only great scene that the whole sympathy of the audience will go, not to her, but to the actress who will play the second lead. After reading the play, one sees that the audience would be absolutely right in so giving its sympathy. The situation is that Leonardo Arciani, an author and journalist, has for some years been unfaithful to his wife, though he still lives with her. His mistress Elena has borne him a daughter. She is tired of him and he of her, but he is

passionately attached to the child and is ruining his career by hack-writing to earn money for the child's upbringing. It is his wife—we are given to understand—with whom he is really in love, but his marital passion is in conflict with the paternal. The knot of this typical Pirandellian dipsychism is cut by Livia, who visits Elena in her poor lodging and in a passionate argument tries to convince her, and the husband who arrives late on the scene, that she must not only give up her lover, as she is quite ready to do, but her child also. Livia goes out before the end of the act, but Leonardo stays and, after a few passages of real pathos, snatches up the child and rushes from the room, leaving the deserted Elena sobbing, with the child's best bonnet in her hand, as the curtain falls. Pirandello, as author, is so absorbed in displaying the psychological mechanics of Livia's mind that he is able—and it is a remarkable feat of abstraction—to treat the genuine tragedy of the mother as a secondary consideration while yet actually constructing the scene so as to express it with no little emotional force. The truth is that Livia and Leonardo are characteristic symbols in a Pirandellian equation, whereas Elena is a solid human being whose spring of action is simple and therefore, to her creator, uninteresting. In this play and the others the construction is firm and the action brisk: what fails is the primary conception into which, owing to his habit of constructing his plot round a set of bare psychological clothes-peg, an element of artificiality is imported. On cool reflection we reject his Martino Lori, his Signora Morli, and his Fulvia Gelli: they and their situations are too ingenious; and if it be objected, on the author's behalf, that the characters came into his head like that, we must answer in his own words that they have not been born whole. Characters live, insists the Father in *Sei Personaggi*:

‘Morrà l'uomo, lo scrittore, strumento della creazione; la creatura non muore più! E per vivere eterna non ha neanche bisogno di straordinarie doti o di compiere prodigi. Chi era Sancho Panza? Chi era Don Abbondio? Eppure vivono eterni, perché —vivi germi—ebbero la ventura di trovare una matrice feconda, una fantasia che li seppe allevare e nutrire: far vivere per l'eternità! ’

There is truth in this, but it is equally true that in Pirandello's work there is not a single character in any degree comparable to Sancho Panza or Don Abbondio. His characters do not live, because they are not solid. They may have been living germs, but they had not the fortune ‘di trovare una matrice feconda.’

We come back then, in the plays as well as in the stories, to the fact that Pirandello's genius shines most purely when the fantastic element is openly admitted: and, after all, there may be a greater suggestion of truth in a fantasy than in a laborious travesty of reality. The plot of *Enrico IV* is fantastic, but it has a real tragic power because the atmosphere of unreality is insisted upon from the beginning. The central figure is a lunatic nobleman who, as the result of a fall from his horse during a pageant, imagined on returning to consciousness that he was really the character he represented, the tragic Emperor who went to Canossa; and the scene is laid at the country villa where he lives with four attendants dressed up as gentlemen of the period and with all the appurtenances that costumiers can devise to humour his delusion. In the few hours of the play's action it comes out that the supposed lunatic has been in possession of his senses for some time but, disgusted by the faithlessness of his friends and of his lady-love, has been keeping up the grim farce of lunacy in savage enjoyment of seeing all around him pipe to his tune. It is a bizarre theme worked up to an effective tragic conclusion, and the strangeness of the setting carries off the artificiality of the whole conception.

However, the gem of Pirandello's humour is the comedy *Sei Personaggi in cerca d'Autore*, a fantasy indeed, but one of seizing originality, extraordinarily ingenious in its mechanism, which sets a tragic drama inside a sheer comedy. It displays all Pirandello's remarkable sense of the stage and enables him, for once, to clothe with full and telling dramatic propriety those intriguing speculations of his on the nature of identity and reality. The germ of the play occurs in one of his short stories, 'La Tragedia d'un Personaggio,' which recounts quite simply how a fictitious character, imperfectly conceived by a fellow author, visited his study one Sunday morning and begged to be given a full and perfect life—that immutable life of a 'character' which, in a sense, is more real than that of human beings, who not only change in fact every day, but whose illusions about themselves and other people's illusions about them are also continually fluctuating. In *Sei Personaggi* this idea is developed into a three-act comedy, with the additional complication of presenting the contrast between the reality of a character in itself and the appearance of reality with which an actor invests it.

There is admirable cleverness in the attack. A dramatic company is about to rehearse upon an empty stage. The actor-manager is giving instructions to the company grouped round him

when a commissionaire announces the arrival of some visitors to see him. Already at the back of the stage, surrounded by a faint aura of queer light, six people have appeared—an elderly man, his wife in deep mourning, his grown-up son, a girl of seventeen, a boy of fourteen, and a little child. The father is their spokesman: they are characters looking for an author to give them complete life, since their first conceiver, for one reason or another, has left them *in limbo*. The Director is at first annoyed and incredulous, but the characters, chiefly the Father and the Daughter, so effectively interest him in the terribly sordid and distressing tragedy with which they are instinct—their sole 'reality'—that he consents to let them play it out before his company, aided by his stage properties, while the prompter takes shorthand notes. All go off into the green room to arrange the preliminaries. This first act is brilliant, not only in its vigorous movement and the vivacity of the dialogue, but also in the telling interplay of the characters, each, by reason of the drama within them, misunderstanding and combating the motives confessed by the others, yet all the while revealing the plot which is the only tie that binds them all together. The kernel of the plot is that the Father, having allowed the Mother to go away with another man and bear him the three younger children, out of a mixture of selfishness and altruism, has discovered again the lost wife and family by being discovered himself on the verge of committing a disgraceful act. In the dubious shop of an immoral old dressmaker the Mother has surprised him in the act of unknowingly seducing his own wife's daughter. In contrition he has taken the whole family back to his home, to the disgust of his legitimate son, and the house has become a furnace of bitter passions and recriminations which breaks out finally into a horrible tragedy involving the death of the baby, the suicide of the young boy, and the flight of the girl on to the streets, and leaving the Father, the Mother, and the Son, strangers, shut up together in a mortal desolation.

The speeches of the Father throughout are worth studying as a revelation of Pirandello's own mental workings: he represents Pirandello's point of view against the Director—a delightfully comic part—who represents the average man. The Father's exclamation of indignation at the injustice of being discovered in an act of secret immorality, since he is otherwise a man of somewhat sentimental rectitude, his argument that all human beings are a bundle of different personalities, and his explanation of the essentials

of the drama in which he is involved reveal more of their author than any amount of commentary. Fragments of purely intellectual discussion fill too great a place in the two succeeding acts, but it would be difficult not to enjoy the supreme comedy of the appalling old dressmaker's materialisation by the mere act of setting the scene to represent her back shop. Madama Pace with her Spanish jargon is a *tour de force*, and it is followed by a passage of considerable entertainment where the Father is pained and the Daughter bursts into fits of laughter when the leading actor and actress begin to rehearse the scene that has just been played before their eyes as it 'actually' was. It is almost a *reductio ad absurdum* of the theory of art as imitation. Act III drags at the beginning, but ends with sensational rapidity. The characters, as it were against their will, are forced by their inexorable 'reality' to enact the culmination of their tragedy. The baby is drowned, the boy shoots himself—and the revolver goes off with a real bang.

'THE MOTHER (*with an agonising cry, running up with many of the Actors, in the midst of general confusion*). My son! My son! (Then, amid the confusion and disconnected screams of the rest) Help! Help!

'THE DIRECTOR (*through the shrieks, trying to make way for himself, while the boy is lifted by the head and heels and carried off*). But has he shot himself? Has he really shot himself?

'SOME OF THE ACTORS. Yes, really! Really! He's dead! He's dead!

'OTHER ACTORS. No! It's all sham! Don't believe it! Sham! Make-believe!

'THE FATHER (*with a loud shout*). Sham indeed! It's reality, reality, sir! (*runs up desperately also*).

'THE DIRECTOR. Make-believe! Reality! Go to the devil all of you! Nothing like this has ever happened to me before! And you have made me lose a whole day!'

In these last lines of the comedy we have, perhaps, Pirandello's criticism of himself. The results of his own ingenuity amaze him. One might compare him to a billiard-player who should set out to make a break on the assumption that the balls are elliptical, whereas they are perfectly round and normal. He may bring off some astonishing shots, but his break will never reach the hundred.

ORLO WILLIAMS.

BY BELSBY WOOD.

I. 'SYMPATHY o' COURT.'

JUSTICE it's a queer thing when it gets into Law Courts, and that's what we a'most got into oorsens at time as I's telling yer on, and all on accoont of Mr. Broon o' Fozzil (him as tonned scale at sixteen stone) getting an invitation tiv his wife' nephew coming of age party. You see it was i' *this* way, sir. Mrs. Broon, she comed o' better-me-sort o' folks; why, her brother, this here nephew' father farmed aboot five hundred acre, and kept two hunting 'osses and a ride-and-drive 'oss, Fletcher they called him, James Fletcher o' Scottering Hall, aboot nine mile no'th-west o' Belsby by craw flight, I should say.

Well, young James gets tonned twenty-one a bit after New Year, and, as he's all bairn they has, his father and mother agrees to give a real flare up iv his honour, and then poor mother gets called away tiv a bedfast sister i' Lincolnshire and they tons it intiv a do for gentlemen only (a very risky kind o' do an' all), so Mr. Broon gets an invitation, and Mrs. Broon didn't nobbut to say she'll have to stop at wom'. Howivver, she teks it all i' good part, for she's strange and flattered at them asking Mr. Broon, why I sure we all on us was, it seemed to fling a clood o' glory ovver Belsby itsen for us farmers was nowt but humble folks i' them days, things is different noo, and nowt no better.

Then it seems there's a stumbling-block i' road. You see, sir, what wi' Mr. Broon' fear o' bronchitis i' future and thowts o' lumbago i' past, he'd been sat coddled up gen fireside for best part o' back-end o' year keeping enemy at bay and supping great cups o' hot treacle to keep cawd oot o' his system.

So when this grand invitation comes Mrs. Broon she says tiv him :

' If thoo can't gan comfortable, love, thoo mawn't gan at all,' so he gives up noation and it gets about village he's accepted this here invitation but can't follow it up i' person, weather being what it was.

Why, we all thowt it was a pity. Young Clappison telled us he'd seen letter of invitation, it wasn't none o' these printed cards,

but written by hand on a good sheet o' paper wi' noa doot as what was to happen when folks gets there—

'There'll be twenty-four gentlemen guests,' letter says, *'three-bottle men all on us, there'll be four legs o' fust-rate mutton on table, and a bod apiece all roond.'*

Why, I nivver heerd tell what mak' o' bod it might be, mebbe nowt no bigger than a partridge, but there's a nice bit o' picking on a plump partridge.

Noo, Mr. Oxtoby he wasn't so very well pleased at not being asked hissen, so I sure he behaved real noble i' matter, for when we was all talking it ovver one day, he says :

'Well, if you awd closed carriage I bought at Doctor' sale would come in handy, I sure Mr. Broon o' Fozzil's welcome to loan on it. We runned it under waggon-shed day we fetched it from sale, and it's been stood there wi'oot moalestation ivver sin', four years come May month.'

So off we goas, me and Tommy Fussey, and drags awd pill-box into light o' stackyard ; aboot a dozen awd hens flies clucking off roof, and cobwebs ! . . . why we had to fetch a besom and a bucket o' water afore ivver we could see main body o' structure, and it wasn't nowt to boast on when it did show up thruff gaps i' cobwebs.

Well, Mr. Snaith says as *he* isn't one to stand i' road o' Mr. Broon' flight intiv upper circles, and he teks and proffers loan of a young bay 'oss he'd just getten brokken to harness (Mr. Broon' own galloway had fallen lame of a fore leg, so was oot o' running for this flare-up party), and so we thinks it's all comfortably settled for Mr. Broon' edification, and we starts discoorsing on whativver possessed Muddle Jackson not to fallow yon four-acre field i' Haven carr lands, when all on a sudden Mr. Snaith he sings oot :

'Why, deng it all ! wha's to drive him ? '

Well, *that* was a noation that stunned us all like a clap o' thunder.

Somebody, but I can't think on wha it was (mebbe Muddle Jackson for daftness o' proposal), says as Mr. Broon could have a rein in at both winders and steer 'oss as he sat, it wadn't be nowt noa wuss than steering an awd schooner ovver sea by position o' stars.

'Noo,' says Mr. Oxtoby, 'he's full o' cawd is poor Mr. Broon, and Mrs. Broon she says he's to goa comfortable or bide at wom,

and there isn't a Jury i' Court would pronoonce sike a method o' locomotion to be owt but opposed to comfort i' ivvery shape and way.'

He was ovver fond o' Law and Justice was Mr. Oxtoby iv his talk, he was shifty enough iv his *actions*.

Then Tommy Fussey puts in *his* wod, he allus had summat to say.

'I's nowt agen driving on him mysen,' he says, 'nobbut Dave Dibnah'll accommodate me wi' his company on box seat,' he says.

'Thoo's afraid o' passing Belsby Wood, Thomas, by thySEN,' says Muddle Jackson.

'And nowt but a fool wadn't be,' says Tommy, 'nowt but a fool, or them as ploonders pheasants.'

And wi' that Muddle Jackson he colours up and says no more; I expects he was thinking o' yon bit o' feather trimming iv his wife' Sunday bonnet.

Well, night o' party comes and me and Tommy drives off to Fozzil to fetch Mr. Broon. We'd all done oor best to give ton oot a real gala aspect. Tommy' sister she took and trimmed lamps (what was left on 'em) wi' bunches o' variegated holly oot o' Rectory gardin, and Mrs. Snaith she'd foond an awd white wedding favour to tie on to whip handle. It was a wild windy night wi' moon racing thruff clooods like a two-year-old, and it bosts oot i' full shine as we pulls up on a bit o' crunchy gravel at Mr. Broon' front door, and lights him up stood i' full array on top o' steps. There was sixteen stone on him iv his customary clothes, but noo he was toffed up summat wonderful. Grey troosers wi' a broad black stripe doon sides on 'em, a black shiny coat (swaller tails, young Clappison telled me), a fur waistcoat cut low wi' a bit o' red flannin showing above it to keep cawd oot (mebbe he'd getten a mustard plaster on into bargain), and a strange dressy tie, black satin tied iv a bow wi' long ends branching oot like a green bay tree, wi' a blue forget-me-not embroidered on one end and a wild rose bud on t'other; Mrs. Broon was a poor hand wi' oven or owt o' that, but strange and natty wi' this crewel work that had comed into fashion, why they said she'd covered all fonitur' i' house wi' it so she was forced to get started on Mr. Broon—I sure he was a real handsome sight! He'd getten two greatcoats on and a black furry hearthrug ovver his shoulders, a woollen muffler boond roond his neck, another ovver his head to keep wind oot on his ears gen cliff top, and a great square

felt hat to top up wi'; he'd getten his great gig umbrella under his arm and a pair o' black cloth gloves to keep draughts off on his hands, Mrs. Broon was throng buttoning 'em on when we pulls up.

Well, he bids her good-bye and keep up her heart aboot him, and he sets his foot on carriage step, and Bon! if it din't snap clean off so as he falls head fost into carriage, and me and Mrs. Broon we has a rare job to get him tonned roond and his legs in after him, and 'oss starting and backing and anxious to be off, mekkin' sad work wi' gravel.

Howivver, at last awd gentleman's settled and I gets up on to box gen Tommy Fussey.

'Doan't squander him oot on road,' says Mrs. Broon.

'Why,' I says, 'we should be bet to do it,' and I sure we should, for what wi' coats and shawls and mufflers he was wedged in as tight as he could fit; 'we shall do well to get him low-sened oot o' carriage at jonney end,' I says.

Well, we clicks thruff village and past Belsby Wood i' fust-rate fashion, then we comes to where road runs not far from cliff top and a storm o' rain or scud blows fair at us; where cliff was lowest I could see foam flung up agen blackness o' clouds. Carriage winder facing east wadn't gang neither up nor doon, it was stuck aboot a thod o' way up, and Mr. Broon gets his head a piece o' ways oot.

'Here! stop, will yer!' he shoots, 'I's catching my death o' cawd.'

So we pulls up and wi' sleet cutting my face nearly oppen I gets roond i' front o' oss to see what ails awd feller; door at near side had been tied on to shaft, it wadn't keep shutten wi'oot.

'Oppen door,' says Mr. Broon, and after a bit o' struggling I gets it wrenched a bit o' ways oppen; Mr. Broon hands oot his great gig umbrella.

'Sneck door,' he says, 'up wi' umbrella, and shove handle in at winder, there's blasts from Siberia blowing fair i' my face,' he says.

Off we sets again and we gets him safely delivered at this grand house, though it took a bit o' tugging to get him landed on steps, and we hears him tell a strange bonny housemaid as oppened door to set his umbrella full spread i' front o' kitchen fire till it was as dry as a glass o' sherry wine. Cooky was iv a fine stew we hears tell afterwards wi' this great thing rolling aboot amongst her feet when she was throng dragging four legs

o' mutton and two dozen bogs oot o' oven, why, and I maks noa manner o' doot there'd be vegetables and puddings and tarts an' all, it was a real slap-up entertainment biv all accoonts, real London fashion wi' cheese and dessert fruits, noa expense spared.

Stable yard was about crooded oot wi' vehicles, and there was a good few grooms an' all; onnyhoo me and Thomas we neigboured up wi' them i' saddle house, and what wi' a bit o' fiddling and singing and eating a good ham supper, time slipped away and stable clock was striking two when we gets started womwards.

Well, as he sits hissen doon i' carriage, Mr. Broon he says he's enjoyed hissen the moast, and he's sure he's behodden tiv us two gentlemen for getting him there so comfortable, and if we gets him home as comfortable as what he'd comed he'd be still more behodden tiv us.

'Not but what,' he says, and he thrusts his great roond face oot at winder, 'when we comes to Cross Roads thoo mun tek tonning by Haven; it's best o' three mile oot o' road, but I wean't pass Belsby Wood at this time o' morning, not when night's runned intiv it wi'oot so much as a blink o' beauty sleep.'

And wha's to blame man? It's a nasty spot is Belsby Wood. Why, i' my great-grandfather' time there was tales o' yon headless woman, Jenny o' Belsby, moaning and groaning oot and loupung on to back of onny trap that passed by, and she's at it yet.

Off we sets, young bay pegging along for all he was woth. Mr. Snaith had bought him off a farmer Howden ways on, and he hadn't picked up noation o' mekking a fool of hissen gen Belsby Wood like these other Belsby 'osses, soa when we comes to Cross Roads Thomas a'most yawns his head off and pulls 'oss up tiv a dead stop.

'Slip doon, Dave,' he says, 'and see if awd feller's asleep. If he is, we'll run him past wood and he'll be nowt no wiser.'

So doon I gets and looks in at winder.

Mr. Broon was sat fair i' middle o' seat, real complacent, wi' his gig umbrella between his knees, and his hands iv his great black cloth gloves folded ovver knob o' handle. He was as soond asleep as an awd hibernating bear colled up iv a cave i' Rocky Mountains.

Well, I owns as we didn't behave honest by him, and finely we was punished for oor pains. If it hadn't been for awd Rector, Mr. Harrison, spilling oil on troubled waters, Mr. Broon o' Fozzil and Mr. Oxtoby an' all, would have had me and Tommy Fussey

afore Magistrates or i' Coonty Court for yon night' jonney, I sure they wad; but Rector he tons it all intiv a rare piece o' fun, and Mr. Broon he gets last wod in, and nowt pleases him noa better than that.

Well, pace we was going it wadn't tek us above a minute or two passing Belsby Wood; it stood endways on to road, and wi' two on us on box, and a 'oss wi'oot suspicions iv his head, it seemed a fond thing to gang three mile roond by Haven. Well, what happened we neither on us knows to this day. Whether a weasel or summat wick runned across road, or whether this here headless woman, Jenny o' Belsby, was sitting nossing her head iv a tree branch, I couldn't say; but just when we should have been on safe grund past wood, 'oss he rears straight on end, and then comes crashing doon a'most on tiv his knees ovver a great heap o' stones ligged upo' roadside; then he teks off as hard as ivver he can lay legs to grund ovver all this rough grass mixed up wi' brambles and fozz bushes, awd pill-box bumping and clattering after him. As to what was tekking place inside on it we nivver had noa thowts; we'd plenty o' trade keeping oor own seats wi'oot troubling oorsens aboot Mr. Broon.

Pace was summat hawful; but Tommy he clung on to reins like a good un, and I held fast on to *him*, for 'oss was bidding fair to drag him off seat.

I nivver seed sike a beggar to pull, and Tommy he keeps on saying ovver and ovver again :

'I's had enough o' this 'ere; I wean't have no more on it!'

But saying and doing's no more akin than poker and tongs, and he had to bide wi' it till 'oss was brought tiv a standstill gen blacksmith' corner, by coming full crash intiv an awd wagginette as was stood iv a bed o' nettles moast o' summer waiting for repairs.

Some of oor friends was waiting up for us, and wasn't ovver pleased to greet us when we bost in on 'em i' this uneducated fashion. I sure it *was* an epitome! A'most afore you could say 'Jack Robinson' best part o' village was crooding roond. My wod! but we had a job to get Mr. Broon extricated; for yer see, sir, bottom o' carriage had fallen clean oot and, what was more peculiar, it was nivver found, but onnyhow Mr. Broon was i' such a state wi' lack o' breath when Doctor and Vet. gets him propped up agen this wagginette that we couldn't none on us mak oot what had really happened him. Whether he'd remained sat, wi' his

feet and umbrella trailing ovver grund, or whether he was stood on end and contriving to keep pace wi' oss, either way it was a very uncomfortable manner o' progression for a man o' his dimensions. As soon as ivver he gets his breath he tons roond on me and Tommy Fussey and shaks his great black-gloved fist iv oor faces, and he says, stamping at us like an awd rabbit :

'I'll Coonty Court you two young fellers for this 'ere steeple-chase,' he says. 'I'll be boond I's lost best part of a stone weight ovver it. Do you call *this* getting me wom as comfortable as what I got there? I'll Coonty Court both on yer !'

Aye, and he meant it an' all. Me and Tommy we slinks off to bed. We wasn't feeling nowt but real shakky oorsens, and we hopes we's heard last o' tale; for Mr. Broon he was laid up for a month, poor man. He got more blinks o' beauty sleep than he bargained for.

'Oss wasn't so much wuss, and Mr. Snaith exonerates us, and ligs any damage on Jenny o' Belsby' back; but Mr. Broon and Mr. Oxtoby is for all ivvers writing to lawyers till all village is by ears—some siding we me and Tommy and some flinging ivvery nasty name they can at us, and saying we isn't fitted to sing i' choir; some saying as damage tiv awd pill-box wadn't be rectified biv a twenty-pund note (why, it wasn't woth twenty pence when we drove pooltry off on it). And then question crops up as to wha'd getten to defray expense o' three new spokes i' Mr. Broon' umbrella, and Tommy stuck it oot *he* wadn't. He says whativver for does onnybody want wi' a gig umbrella when he's riding snug iv a closed carriage. And then them as sided wi' Mr. Broon says noabody but a numskull like Tommy Fussey wad talk so nimble aboot *closed* carriages when they'd shipped a ton o' sea water in at an oppen winder as wadn't shut try ivver soa.

Just for one week there was a reglar dead calm, and Rector thowt trouble had blawed ovver; and then Mrs. Fussey, Tommy' mother, gets a bill sent in from draper shop i' village for two black bone buttons and workman's time re-thumbing a pair o' black cloth gloves on January eighteenth. And, my word! fat was i' fire woss than ivver it was. All unbeknownst to Tommy, she clicks off same day to Fozzil and tells Mrs. Broon she'll Coonty Court *her* for all she has a nephew comed of age; it was nowt no more than what other folks had wi'oot they'd died o' summat fust. Mrs. Broon was a very whisht little body, so she says nowt at time—just gangs on wi' her crewel work; but next week at missionary sewing meeting she slips very stealthy intiv armchair

as iveverybody knaws Mrs. Fussey reckoned was her own property like. Howivver, she gets sarved oot for her nasty trick, for when her best silver thimble rolls under table it's picked up flattened oot o' all resemblance; Tommy Fussey' mother had setten her foot on it. I sure women's woss than men when once they gets started, but men was nowt to boast on ovver this to-do i' Belsby.

Just afore Easter I lights on awd Rector riding his white 'oss by Cross Roads, and he says:

'Well, Dave, lad, I think trouble's about blawed ovver by noo; we shan't hear no more o' Coonty Courting on yer.' And then if it didn't all brek oot again and at Easter Vestry of all unseemly places!

They was all sat roond as amiable as could be, wi' Mr. Broon' umbrella propped outside o' door i' case of a shower, and they was all agreed about repairing spoot ovver sooth door (starnils had made strange bad work wi' building their nests), and then Tommy he must gan and put in *his* wod.

'I's i' full accord wi' *repairing o' spoot*,' he says; 'but if it comes to Mr. Oxtoby' reckless talk of a coat o' paint, why, I shall put my foot doon,' he says.

'I doan't doot but what yer will, Mr. Fussey,' says Mr. Oxtoby, real nasty. 'Fusseys is noted for putting their foots doon, and not allus clear o' silver thimbles neither.'

Well, Rector closes meeting very sharp, and next day he rides roond village on his awd white 'oss, up to Fozzil and all outlying farms. And then it comes oot he says we shall be getting into paper, and he wean't hear no more o' this Coonty Court business, but if all consarned will bring their pipes up to Rectory at eight o'clock o' Wednesda' night we'll choose a jury o' real able-bodied men and get matter settled iv a dignified fashion among oorsens wi'oot emptying oor pockets by filling lawyers'. Well, we all agrees to this, and I sure we passed a real pleasant evening. He was a bachelor was Mr. Harrison, but housekeeper had made all real comfortable for us. Jury was chosen as likely-handed chaps wi' their fists if verdict wasn't agreeable tiv all parties—it's shortest road to Justice when all's said and done wi'—and we didn't trouble oorsens about engaging Coonsels for Prosecution and Defence; they'd have been ovver partial, and it teks ovver much time priming 'em up to tell lies. But Rector he sits i' Judgment-seat, and them as hangs back from coming forrad they sits where they can and is coonted as Court. We nobbut raised six on Jury, and they sits

on a great cooch as tight as peas iv a pod. Well, Rector he lights his pipe and moations to company to foller suit, and then he says :

‘Noo, whether we copies procedure o’ Coonty Court or York Assizes depends on how little we knaws o’ their ways; but it appears, or it *will* do soa when these good folks i’ Court gets done wi’ striking matches, that Mr. Broon o’ Fozzil charges Mr. Fussey and Mr. Dibnah’ son David wi’ damage—*wilful* damage—tiv his person, and that Mr. Oxtoby charges *them* wi’ damage, otherwise than *wilful*, tiv his closed carriage, or brougham correctly soa called, and that *they* charges him and Mr. Broon wi’ defamation o’ their characters. You can call witnesses, or give evidence on your own behalf if you have a fancy to do soa, but there’s no law compelling it.’

‘I plain wods, we’s getten option,’ says Mr. Broon.

Well, we talks affair inside oot, and many a good laugh we gets ovver it. Witnesses pops up all ovver room. Rector he listens tiv all sides, but he wean’t hear no talk o’ Jenny. Mr. Broon dizn’t say a deal, it was *last* wod he cared aboot, and I could see Tommy Fussey was a’most boonding oot on his skin wi’ summat he’d getten to say when Rector gives him chance; he telled me afore ivver case was oppened that he’d getten *summat* up his sleeve.

‘Then thoo’d best by airf keep it there,’ I says tiv him.

Mr. Oxtoby, for once iv a way, was real eloquent ovver this mishap tiv his carriage; he seemed to be speaking wi’ his whole heart iv it till his voice fair trembled wi’ emotion. Onnyhoo, when he finishes he wins a remarkable demonstration iv his favour biv his mode o’ conducting his case, and he stands there all ready wi’ his smiles and bows of acknowledgment to these clappers i’ Court when up springs Tommy Fussey, and he says :

‘And wha paid licence for this closed carriage, this awd hen roost, o’ yours, Mr. Oxtoby?’

Mr. Oxtoby drops his mooth wide oppen at that, and we all on us thowt he was ganning to ton real nasty; but, noa! he sinks doon intiv a big armchair and he bosts intiv a great lood laugh and he says :

‘Why, thoo’s hit on right nail for once, Mr. Fussey, for I sure I’s blessed if I knaws, nobbut that I *hasn’t*.’

‘Then thoo’d noa business to loan it oot,’ says Tommy. ‘Sitting there so full of thy own integrity! I’ll have Justice on yer yet, Mr. Oxtoby.’

'Aye,' says Rector, 'this puts a fresh complexion on case, ganning back to what scientists calls "fust causes." I doot sword o' Damocles is hanging ovver *your* head noo, Mr. Oxtoby.'

Well, at that Court claps looder than ivver it did, for with all his mischief folks set a deal o' store by Tommy Fussey, and Foreman o' Jury leans ovver end o' box, and fetches him a good clap on his shoulder. Tide was all aflow i' Tommy' favour after that. Then Rector he sums it all up from start to finish, addressing hissen in main to Jury, and when he finishes he says tiv 'em :

'Can you deliberate here, or do you wish to retire ?'

'Well, sir, we're sat middling comfortable,' says Foreman ; 'change o' posture might be change for woss.'

'Aye,' says some i' Court, 'it wad mek awkwardness for us an' all. We should be fossed to shift *oor* seats, if Jury was to lowsen oot o' Jury Box ; they'd best do their deliberations sat peaceable on cooch.'

So Jury gets started to discuss case, but Court gives 'em sike a deal of advice that they teks off into dining-room, and we sees no more on 'em for a quarter of an hour. It appears afterwards that fire i' dining-room had popped oot unbeknownst and house-keeper sarves 'em wi' a cup o' hot cocoa to keep cawd oot, and they passed time la-ing ovver a new hymn tune for Sunday till it was cooled enough for to sup.

Hooivver, at last they bosts in tail ower end and sattles theirsens i' Jury Box, and somebody, Mr. Straker, mebbe, says :

'Well, gentlemen, and are yer agreed on verdict ?'

'Why,' says Foreman, 'some on us is, and some on us isn't.'

Mr. Broon smiles all ovver his great fat face when he hears that.

'I *fust* place,' says Foreman, 'noabody's nivver telled us wha's prisoner, which seems to place us i' dark, but as three on us sings i' choir we exonerates Mr. Fussey and David Dibnah, trusting they'd sarve us same i' similar predicament. Mr. Oxtoby, we says nowt agen *him*, as he owns hissen i' wrong aboot carriage licence ; and as for Mr. Broon o' Fozzil, if *he's* Prisoner, we all wi' one consent pronoounces him to be "Guilty," but we recommends him to mossy on accoont o' his bulk. Folks wha ton scale at sixteen stone (and has getten noa more refined manners than to mek a public boast on it) they've noabody but theirsens to blame if they *diz* drop thruff floor of a neighbour' closed carriage wi'oot testing seaworthiness o' vehicle i' *fust* place ; soa as we doots he'd brek

gallus afore it wad brek *him*, we're agreed to relax death penalty if Judge will dismiss him wi' a caution.'

Then Court raises a demonstration i' favour o' poor Mr. Broon, and I doot there'd have been a bit o' trouble between them and Jury, nobbut housemaid walks in wi' tray o' refreshments.

When we gets outside o' house, there's a crood from village stood i' gardin.

' Wha's guilty ? ' they all says.

' Mr. Broon o' Fozzil,' we says.

Oot he comes.

' Soa you've lessen your case, Mr. Broon ? ' they says.

' Oh, aye,' he says, and he pulls on his black cloth gloves and ups wi' his gig umbrella. ' Oh, aye,' he says, ' I's lessen my case, but I'd getten Sympathy o' Court.'

CATHERINE S. FOSTER.

CHARLES DICKENS : A POST-MORTEM INTERVIEW.

RECORDED BY SIR HENRY LUCY.

THIRTY years ago London was profoundly interested in a new game known as 'table-turning.' The process was simple, requiring neither instruction nor training. A group of persons sat round a table of any size or shape. Placing open hands upon it, they were careful to establish and preserve a chain of connection by touching the extended fingers of their neighbour on either side. After a brief interval the table began to move, often with considerable decision. Usually the 'spirit,' understood to be the motive power unseen behind these gyrations, would enter into friendly conversation with the company. This was achieved by one of the sitters slowly reciting the alphabet. When a particular one was reached, the table assented by a vigorous tap on the floor. The alphabet was recited as before. Other letters were approved, and so words were spelled, completing a more or less intelligible sentence.

I was by no means credulous of supernatural agency. But, having on several occasions seen a table hopping about a room and spelling out words, I resolved to try the game under conditions that precluded conspiracy on the part of anyone taking part in it. My wife, a clergyman, and myself, seated ourselves at a small table and completed the ordained ritual by joining finger-tips of hands laid upon it. We were each and all earnestly desirous of ascertaining the truth of the business, and in what followed there certainly was no manual interference with the movements of the table.

In a few minutes we distinctly felt the table throb. This increased till it was moving off towards the window.

'Will you tell us your name?' I asked.

Instantly the table stopped and gave the decisive rap on the floor signifying assent.

I began to recite the alphabet. Raps spelled out the unexpected name :

C-h-a-r-l-e-s D-i-c-k-e-n-s.

I have before me now my wife's visiting cards, hastily produced, upon which I wrote what was subsequently spelled out by my voiceless interlocutor. What puzzled me at the time was his rattling boyish flippancy, his childish mis-spelling of familiar words, and his frequent lapses from grammar. 'Some people is werry green,' was one of his remarks, which the cynical reader

may regard as singularly appropriate, being offered in the presence of three grown-up people seated round an ambulatory table.

'We are jolly good fellows, you and me,' 'She is a corker,' 'Hold your gab—go home,' are some of the disjointed phrases spelled out; the latter being, I regret to say, addressed to the clergyman, who had offered an inoffensive remark. More curious was the message, 'Mary Hogarth's works serve God. He sent her to help little children.'

These seem trivial, inconsequential observations, scarcely worth the while of a great novelist revisiting the earth to utter them through the medium of a table's legs. There are, however, one or two striking points which induce me to publish this record. At the time our table turned I had not read Forster's 'Life of Dickens.' Indeed, I am not sure that it had been published. I had never heard the name 'Mary Hogarth.' Still less was I acquainted with Dickens's intense love for her, which led him, in anticipation of his death, to direct that his bones should be laid to rest in her grave.

When, years later, I read Forster's 'Life,' I was profoundly struck by the discovery that in his intimate correspondence with his biographer, Dickens was accustomed to misspell long words, and to coin phrases like 'Some people is werry green.' A marked feature of the ejaculated conversation was that 'the spirit' insisted upon addressing itself exclusively to me. When my wife or the clergyman attempted to join in, they were rebuffed with almost equal sharpness.

'You are a good fellow. I shall look after you,' was one of his remarks. Later, in what is, perhaps, the most striking thing in the interview, he instructed me to call upon his son Charles, after his father's death editor of *All the Year Round*.

'He will be glad to see you,' the table rapped. 'You can help one another.'

At this time I was an obscurity, my name unknown in the journalistic or literary world. To call casually on the editor of a leading periodical was to court immediate rebuff. In other circumstances I would as soon have thought of calling at Marlborough House, and sending in my card to the Prince of Wales. I was so struck with this curious command that on the following morning I obeyed the injunction. On sending up my name to the editor I was, on his invitation, straightway admitted to his room. I was received with the cordiality of an old acquaintance. I took with me a short article, painstakingly written, and with equal diligence returned by the editors of several other likely

magazines. Mr. Dickens asked me to leave it with him, promising to look over it, and, if it were suitable, use it in *All the Year Round*. Three days later I received not only a proof of my article, but what I at the time regarded as a handsome cheque.

This may have been due to the merit, hitherto undiscovered, of the article, subsequently included in a volume of reprinted matter. How it came to appear in print I have simply related.

I have noted the curious fact that throughout the gyration of the table it rapped out snubs for my companions when they attempted to engage its attention, addressing itself solely to me. This remains inexplicable, unless it be connected with my intimate knowledge of Dickens' work, and some close coincidences in our life. I believe I began to read 'David Copperfield' when I was between six and seven years old. Thereafter, I greedily devoured any other of his works I could lay my hands upon. A few years ago, dining with Sir Frederick Macmillan, I found myself honoured by being seated between Mrs. Pellegrini, daughter of Charles Dickens, and Lady Ritchie, Thackeray's daughter. The former told me she read everything I wrote in *Punch*, the *Observer*, or the magazines, because more frequently than any other author I made references to her father's characters in his novels.

There were some striking coincidences between Dickens' life and mine. As a small boy he began in an uncongenial occupation. So did I. He earned his first weekly wage in the blacking business : I in the hide and valonia trade. We both laboriously taught ourselves shorthand. My difficulty in acquiring the art, in which, to tell the truth, I was never proficient, is vividly described by Dickens. 'The changes that were rung upon dots, which in such a position meant such a thing, and in such another position something else entirely different ; the wonderful vagaries that were played by circles ; the unaccountable consequences that resulted from marks like flies' legs ; the tremendous effect of a curve in the wrong place not only troubled my waking eyes, but reappeared in my sleep. When I had blindly groped my way through them, there appeared a procession of new horrors called arbitrary characters, which insisted, for instance, that a thing like the beginning of a cobweb meant expectation, and that a pen-and-ink sky-rocket stood for disadvantageous.'

However, by stubbornly sticking to it, we both attained a measure of proficiency that enabled us to escape into the newspaper world. He obtained admission to the House of Commons Press Gallery as representative of the *Morning Chronicle*, and

remained there for some years; I for nearly fifty. He became editor of the *Daily News*, and so in turn did I. He found the position uncongenial. I had the same experience. After seeing to press the *Daily News* of Wednesday, January 21, 1846, Dickens resigned the editorship, writing to Forster, on Monday, February 6, 'I am tired to death.' I was more patient. I kept my nose to the grindstone a year and a half, thereafter retiring from a lofty position reluctantly accepted, and joyfully returning to my box in the Press Gallery.

In some autobiographical notes written for Forster, and subsequently drawn upon in the pages of 'David Copperfield,' Dickens wrote: 'On Saturday night my usual way home was over Blackfriars Bridge and down the turning in the Blackfriars Road, which has Rowland Hill's Chapel on one side, and the likeness of a golden dog licking a golden pot over a shop door on the other.' For some years it was my daily practice to walk from my residence in Brixton Road along the Blackfriars Road to the *Daily News* office in Bouverie Street. I never passed the turning in the Blackfriars Road without raising my hat in silent salute to the pale-faced, half-fed little fellow 'in white hat, little jacket, corduroy trousers' whom I saw turn the corner on the opposite side of the road, bent on earning his six or seven shillings a week for fixing covers on pots of blacking and fastening them down.

On one occasion, in conversation with Charles Dickens, Forster expressed doubt whether there was any reality in the existence of Dora, the child-wife of David Copperfield, and in his love for her passionately protested in the novel, which the author admits is founded on the story of his own life. In reply Dickens wrote a letter, the autograph of which I have been privileged to see, in which he affirmed the actuality of the episode. Later, as we know, he met Dora in the flesh—a good deal of it—and was finally disillusioned.

From the same private collection of autographs in which the Dora epistle is cherished I found another letter from Charles Dickens, not hitherto published, and obtained permission to copy it. It is dated April 12, 1840, and is in his most charmingly playful style. It is evidently in reply to one of those communications with which people who have nothing else to do trouble busy public men. 'Mr. Charles Dickens,' the novelist writes, 'sends his compliments both to the gentleman and the lady who do him the honour to differ upon an illustrated point in "Nicholas Nickleby," and begs to inform them that the lady sitting down is intended

for Mrs. Kenwigs, and the lady standing up for the designing Miss Petowker. But Mr. Dickens begs the gentleman and lady unknown to take especial notice that neither of these portraiture is quite correct, Mrs. Kenwigs being constitutionally slim and delicate, and of a slight figure (quite unimpaired by her frequent confinements), and Miss Petowker a young female of some personal attractions, set off by various stage effects and professional captivations.'

Peggotty's house is thus described in 'David Copperfield.'

'I looked in all directions as far as I could stare, over the wilderness and away at the sea and away at the river, but no house could I make out. There was a black barge or some other kind of superannuated boat not far off, high and dry on the ground, with an iron funnel sticking out of it for a chimney, and smoking very cosily. But nothing else in the way of habitation was visible to me.'

'That's not it,' said I; 'that ship-looking thing?'

'That's our house, Mas'r Davy,' returned Ham.'

Making a pilgrimage to Yarmouth, I went in search of the famous homestead. Discovery created as much amazement as the earlier one had wrought in the more ingenuous mind of young Copperfield. My guide, an ancient mariner, who had begun life as the driver of a fly, conducted me to a street well within the limits of the boulevard that faces the beach.

'There it is,' he said, pointing the butt end of his whip towards a snug villa on the brow of which flared the legend, 'Peggotty's House.'

The explanation of the mystery is that this painfully modern residence has been built on what is certified to be the site of the old boat stranded on the beach, which, more than fifty years ago, Dickens came upon during a visit to Yarmouth, and peopled with a family that will never die.

During the last half century the sea has appreciably receded on this part of the coast, and Yarmouth has added many acres to its boundaries. Around the point to the north, and along the stretch of coast upon which the North Sea beats, an exactly reverse process is taking place. The land is being steadily encroached upon by the sea. Not a winter passes but long sections of the soft rock that here guards the kingdom, undermined by the turbulent ocean, tumbles down. At low water a post is seen marking the site of the engulfing of a Norman church. Perhaps the very sands washed from this strip of coast have been in their turn laid down on the southern shore.

At another point of sea frontage the tide has finally ebbed, leaving high and dry the site of Peggotty's home.

A KASHMIR STAG.

WITHIN the wide borders of the state of Kashmir are to be found some of the great game animals of the world—sheep, goat, and deer ; a really fine specimen of *Ovis Ammon*, or ibex, or markhor, or barasingh is a trophy of which any stalker may be proud. This paper concerns itself with deer only ; experienced Indian sportsmen will not learn anything from it, but it may possibly have a little interest for those at home who have never shot anything larger than a stag, or maybe a chamois or wild boar.

The barasingh, the great Kashmir stag, is to the casual observer very like our red deer, but his habits are different, and he lives in woods rather than in open country. Through the courtesy of the Maharajah I was allowed to shoot one of these stags, and I made an expedition with my wife to a preserve called Traal, some thirty miles from Srinagar, in search of him. These 'rukhs,' as they are called, are very large and are not open to the public, so I thought that I should not have much difficulty in securing a good head, and in my ignorance was only afraid that the novelty and excitement of the stalk would be only too soon over. In this I was wrong ; the barasingh is not to be found in herds like our northern deer, and when he is found it is often not at all easy to get at him. Mr. Wallace, an authority on deer, states in 'The Gun at Home and Abroad' that 'probably there are fewer stags killed in the whole of Kashmir in a season than in a single large forest in Scotland.'

It was late in November when we made our little expedition, and at this time of year stalking in these woods is much more difficult than earlier in the autumn ; at all times the danger of disturbing deer by treading on rotten sticks has to be guarded against, but during this month there is the additional risk of causing alarm by rustling leaves, especially in the dry weather usual then. In a steady wind, even in a light breeze, the risk would be negligible ; but it is a peculiarity of this part of the state that you rarely do get any wind to help you. The shooting on the famous Hokra Jeel nearly always takes place in calm weather, or the bags of wildfowl secured here, large as they are, would be very much larger. On the summit of the range of hills we worked amongst, spurs of the Himalayas, even 8000 feet up, there was often no suspicion of a wind ;

and during the whole of our time I was seldom quite certain from what quarter it came, and I often marvelled at the confidence with which our stalker made his approaches. This made the getting at deer very difficult ; you often never knew that you were in their neighbourhood till you saw them slipping away. Arch your foot as much as you could, step as delicately as you might, there came at intervals the crack of a broken stick, and the stag you were seeking seldom waited for a second sinister warning.

Our temporary home was a wooden hut on the border of a mighty forest, and our men, the servants, ponymen, woodcutters, etc., some twenty in all, lived in tents which we brought with us. The hut was quite comfortable ; a roaring log fire was kept up at night, and as the floor was covered inches deep with hay, it was the hand of Providence alone which saved us from being burnt out. We dined outside in one tent, and another served as a bathroom. We had not associated frost with India, but the ground round our dwelling was often a hard mass of ice in the mornings, as I once or twice found out to my cost.

The plan of operations for the first day was to make an early start, ride for a couple of hours on the edge of the forest, then get into it and have a second breakfast, and wait, with what patience we could command, for many hours, listening for the roar of a stag. We were up at four, and arrived at our destination about seven, and there we remained with little movement for the greater part of the day, getting back to the camp after six.

The long ride in the dark was bitterly cold, but when we reached our bivouac the men lit a brazier they had brought with them, and with this and long Gilgit boots and rugs we managed to keep comfortably warm. Our nullah—or glen—was on the north side of the hill, and the sun, which was blazing all day on the opposite side, never showed itself to us till three, and then only for a few minutes. The southern part of this range was grassy and quite bare of trees ; ours densely wooded. We were astonished to find the maidenhair fern growing here in great abundance, in the snow sometimes, or covered with a delicate fretwork of frost ; I suppose you could walk over it for miles. It was strange to see a fern which we knew only in greenhouses luxuriantly flourishing in such cold surroundings—the plant that lives in the rocks on the coast of Clare is a different species. It seemed at first almost an impertinence to crush down the dainty fronds, but the feeling of reverence passed, and we tramped over it with as little feeling as we used to have when follow-

ing a salmon down a famous Norway river by meadows deep in lily-of-the-valley. Kashmir is a great garden at the right times of the year ; cultivated crocus and colchicum were showing in purple masses in the fields, but except for these and one solitary rose we saw no flowers. The rose I came across on this particular morning, a perfect single one, proudly lifted up its lovely face on the edge of the gloomy wood, and I looked in vain for any companions.

We sat very quietly in our bivouac, listening, at first with every nerve on end, then, as time went on, more listlessly, for sounds of deer. The hot ashes in the brazier showed no flame, and if it gave out any fumes they would not be so offensive to passing deer as was our own scent. We heard many forest sounds : birds were greeting the day, and some animal—a marten, I think—now and then gave his call. Late in the day we did hear the call of a stag—rather a whistle than the full-toned roar or bellow he makes with us—now far away, now seemingly close at hand. Then we moved higher up the face, but we never saw any deer. This was our only long wait ; during the rest of our time in Traal we were much more actively employed. I do not know what a Scotch stalker would have said—or thought—about this morning's operations : about the brazier, the long boots, and rugs ; the day's wait in the cold wood, and our many attendants.

My servant acted as interpreter between us and Aziz Khan, the shikari. The former was a Madrasee who hated cold and exertion, and I am sure continually cursed the fate which had taken him so far from his sunny home. Aziz was skilful at his work, keen and intelligent, and a pleasant companion.

At last, after some days of hard and unrewarded but very interesting work, we came in definite contact with a stag ; he was standing in a dense thicket, perfectly motionless, and I marvelled at the minute accuracy of eye which enabled the stalker to make him out. Only the hind-quarters of the deer were in sight ; the light was very bad, and his colour blended in so well with the grey bark and twigs that it was only with the greatest difficulty I could distinguish him at all. Nothing could be done with him then, so we crawled on to a little knoll some 150 yards above him to eat our lunch and wait for some change of position.

It is always satisfactory to a sportsman to have something in hand by midday—a salmon on the bank, or a decent stag lying out waiting for the pony ; then, let happen what may, you are safe for the day. And if you are to lose your fish or miss the stag, it is

better, too, that such things should take place early so that time may be given you to get over the trouble. On the other hand it often comes about that the midday's satisfaction is interfered with by bad luck in the evening, and you do not go home so happily as you expected. Again, the disappointment of the morning may be wiped out by success at dusk. A book on the philosophy of field sports has not yet, I think, been written ; it could be made an interesting one if it were undertaken by an understanding man. The slaughter of half a dozen lions in East Africa before breakfast might be a poor thing to read about compared with St. John's failures to get at some not very notable stag, or one of Sir Herbert Maxwell's little notes on a big salmon in the Rauma.

We ate our lunch, and a crumb of a sandwich going the wrong way was the cause of great anxiety to Aziz Khan ; I had to fight against a tickling cough for a long time, and, watched by his reproachful eye, nearly broke a blood-vessel in my head in the attempt to smother it.

The stag stood perfectly motionless for nearly half an hour—there were no flies at this time of the year to bother him ; the mark he presented was a useless one, for if I had hit the exact spot aimed at, the shot would have been too far back and would hardly have stopped him. But at last he did shift his position a little, and I could make out part of the shoulder. Whether I was right to take the chance then I am not sure : he might have come into a more open place ; on the other hand, he might have moved farther into the wood, altogether out of sight. At any rate I fired. Then there was a mighty upheaval in the thicket, a crashing of horns and hoofs, followed by silence. We crawled down, and made as careful an examination of the place and the ground in the neighbourhood as was possible, but we never saw him again. The chance was not a very good one, and I should not have minded the miss if the mark had been a red deer and not a new variety of game. When we rejoined the men we had left at the bottom of the hill they reported having seen a bear, and we spent what daylight was left in searching for him and in moving likely little nullahs in the direction in which they had last seen him, but he too eluded us. So that night we rode the long journey home blank and in sombre mood.

The next morning I was up very early, and worked a different part of the beat, making a long climb through the woods almost in the dark. At daylight we found a good stag ; he was on the move, and it was very difficult to keep in touch with him in the thick

covert. But he wandered at last into a bit of fairly open ground, and then we came upon him too quickly and he spotted us. He stood for a second on the edge of a ridge, and I had just time to get a snap shot at him with the express ; then he was over it and disappeared. There was a deep, narrow, jungly nullah in his line, in which it seemed hopeless to look for a stag, wounded or not, and so we sat down above it, and spied. I had not much hope ; I was not at all sure that I had hit him, and though Aziz was more confident he was not sure either. But after some minutes of anxious waiting and peering about we saw him again ; he left the nullah, and set off up the steep face before him. The bullet was in him all right, but too far back in the body ; and from the pace he was going and the direction it was plain that in a few minutes he would reach another bad jungle, far larger than the one he had left, and be hopelessly lost to us.

This would have been the chance for a dog ; what would I have given then for 'Mhairi,' my great yellow tracker ! She would have run him down in a few minutes and made certain of a triumph which, without her, seemed indeed far enough off. But Mhairi, who never but once in long years of hunting together had ever failed me, was thousands of miles away among the Donegal hills. I could see—vividly and exactly—what the proceedings would have been if she had been with me. I could see her excitedly nosing for the scent, following on the line, coming into view, and then the mad wild rush and mighty leap, an avalanche of yellow and brown bodies, all mixed up together for a moment, and the stag beaten to the ground ; and then triumph and the finishing shot. A dog in a forest must be used with care and judgment, never loosed unless the chance is more than fair ; but if he is a good one he is a great adjunct to the pleasure of stalking, and an abiding source of confidence and comfort to the man who shoots.

I had a second rifle with me, a Mannlicher, and it did not take many seconds to fit on its telescopic sight. I could get no rest, and had to fire from my knees uphill ; I had tried this rifle only at a range, testing it, never at game ; the stag was very far off, much too far off ; and I had not much confidence in my power of holding steady, or then in my weapon. And so a great flush of triumph passed through me when I saw the barasingh go head over heels and heard a cry of exultation from the stalker.

Then I had a terrible time of it ; I knew now that I could most likely make sure of the stag if I got to him quickly. But a most

untoward thing happened : two or three of our followers, who I suppose had been tracking us through the woods, suddenly appeared and, headed by Aziz Khan, started off at full speed for the place where he was lying, far above us and far away, and separated from us by the ghastly little jungle through which it was impossible for me at any rate to move quickly. I shouted to them to stop ; I might as well have remonstrated with a landslip.

Every stalker knows—every stalker of experience—that if a stag on getting the bullet staggers about or gallops off, and then suddenly falls, he is dead—shot through the heart. And every stalker should know that if the deer falls instantly to the shot, he may be by no means dead or likely to die, and it is advisable to get up to him as speedily as you can, or you will probably lose him. If he is hit through the neck he will drop like a stone, and he is dead. If the backbone is *just* grazed by the bullet he will also drop, but, stunned only for the moment, will quickly recover himself and be off. I remember an experience of this kind happening long ago which taught me a lesson I have never forgotten. My companion in the Ross-shire forest was the late Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth, and one day, being unable to stalk, he offered to lend me his rifle ; so for the first time in my life I went out, a proud and happy lad, doubly armed. As fortune willed, we made a successful attack on a big lot of deer, and I got a right and left—if it is possible to get a right and left with two rifles. First one stag went down, rolling over and over, turning somersault after somersault on the very steep grassy face, and then the other followed him. Both deer fell at once, and they continued their rolling till they lay many hundreds of feet below us, at the bottom of the hill. If such a thing was to happen *now* I should be after those stags with every ounce of speed I could command, with a mind full of doubt and anxiety, ready to sit down and shoot if I saw the slightest sign of life. But in those long-ago careless days I felt no ‘hurrying feet.’ I sat down with the stalker—who certainly should have known better—and lit a pipe, and took out my glass to spy the heads, willing to prolong the pleasure of anticipation—perhaps the happiest man at that moment north of the Beauly Firth—thinking of the tale I should have to tell when I got back to the lodge.

Then a dreadful thing happened—two dreadful things. First one of the stags began to move about, then he stood up ; while I stared at him in horror his companion also found his legs ; they

looked round about them rather stupidly at first, shook themselves, and then one of them trotted off round the shoulder of the hill to the east, and the other performed a similar movement westwards ; the trot soon turned into a gallop ; they disappeared into the depths of the forest, and we never saw them again. I doubt if a few hours later either of those deer was much mindful of what he had gone through. I had fired too high, deceived by the steepness of the ground ; if I had got them, say, a quarter of an inch lower, the backbones would have been broken and they would both have been mine. So narrow sometimes is the dividing line between happiness and misery.

This long digression is to explain why I was full of forebodings when my stag fell so instantly : I could not get to him as quickly as the men ; what use would they be in a crisis, armed as they were only with long sticks ? They were soon out of sight, and I followed at my utmost pace. Even when free of the jungle the going was very bad : the hill looked smooth enough at a distance, but it was covered with rocks of every size and shape, and these were hidden by very long tall yellow grass, so that it was impossible to make rapid progress ; and the hill was very steep. It was a long time—it seemed a very long time—before I saw the men again, and then only their heads. I knew that if the stag had strength to get up he was—in the wild country in front of us—lost for ever. Then I climbed a little higher, and the men were looking *down*—instead of staring about them—and my mind was suddenly at ease.

No one who has not had often to do with him can understand the tenaciousness of a stag. He will often fall to a body shot ; then, when he goes on, you may hit him again and again about the same place and he seems to take little notice of the repeated shocks : the nerves are injured or destroyed, and he seems deadened to the pain. I think in bygone days at school I experienced something of the same kind : the first and second and some later applications of the instrument of instruction were speedily burnt, as it were, into your system ; then, if the dominie prolonged too much his operations, as the old-fashioned ones were wont to do, you became less sensitive, more callous. But it is a long time since I went through this experience, and I should like to consult a modern schoolboy on the subject—if, indeed, modern boys are so urged along the same sure and pleasant paths of learning. I have read of a man who was being put to the torture, that after the

rack had been applied for some time with great severity, he was seen to smile. His persecutors, naturally enjoying themselves, were annoyed at this indecent behaviour and demanded the reason for it. Then the poor victim explained that after the first few dreadful wrenches he felt no pain.

Our stag was a very good one, well worth a much longer chase, and even more trouble and anxiety than he had given us. Major Wigram, who keeps an official register of all game killed in Kashmir, was interested in the head, which had six points on one horn and four on the other; usually the number is equal. His horns measured just over 42 inches, so he was a good beast, though, of course, not a super one. I sent a man off at once with a note for my wife, who, after four hard days, was having a rest, and in about three hours she climbed up to the shoulder where we waited, and photographed the prize and its contented captors. Many a good stag have I owed to her quick, far-seeing eyes, and the only flaw in the day's proceedings was that she was not out.

How heavy this barasingh was, we had no means of finding out; it can seldom happen that these deer are killed where there are opportunities for weighing them. I have shot some hundreds of stags and guessed the weight of every one of them—guesses to be verified or not in the larder a few hours later,—but I have no idea what the decision of the steel-yard would have been here. I have killed a few over 20 stones, one up to 25, and in my memory the latter would have looked like a 'small piece' of our prize—as Mr. Bromley Davenport's Norway gaffer said on a famous occasion when he compared a forty-three pounder on the bank with a huge salmon he failed to land. He had rolled down into a little cup on the hillside, and it was hard work for a good many men to get him out of it. I discovered that the reason why Aziz Khan and his men were so anxious to get quickly to the deer was that they might find him alive, and make him lawful food by cutting his throat—'halalling,' it is called; but they were too late, and honest enough to say so, and the great mass of meat was wasted. I thought it was too far on in the season to try the quality of the haunches.

After I had examined the deer and duly admired him, I sat down to rest and smoke a pipe, and then a little incident occurred which took one far away from Scotch stalking; without saying a word, two men took possession of my legs and gently worked and rubbed them, massaging them, in fact, through the clothes, and I

am sure that this was a pleasant and useful way of getting out any stiffness there might be in those limbs.

So we carried the head back with us in triumph to the camp, and the cook and ponymen and woodcutters—all those, in fact, who knew nothing whatever about the matter—asserted that it was the finest trophy that had ever been secured in Traal Rukh.

Our wanderings through the great woods of Traal were pleasant ones, even on the days when we had no sport, and perhaps hardly saw any deer. Now and then we passed a line of 'machans,' sitting places built high up in trees, where the rifles wait for driven deer or bears. We saw the little nullah where, not long before, a shikari had been shot; creeping through thick cover and indistinctly seen, the poor man was mistaken for a bear. Now and then we got clear of the woods altogether, to the 8000 feet ridge above them. Here the sun was powerful, and we lay for hours basking in it, looking at the wonderful view, forests and plains and far-away lakes, with some of the mighty peaks of the Himalayas as a background; watching the vultures sailing and wheeling and poising against the brilliant sky. I was always hoping to spy a stag here coming out of the cold woods to get a little sunshine; but the barasingh seems seldom to give his enemies a chance of catching him on open ground. Still, the unexpected often happens. The best stag killed in Kashmir for, I believe, many years fell to the rifle of a lame man, who, unable to do any walking, was posted on a hill while his companions did their day's hunting far away. It seemed a poor chance, hardly worth taking, but the stag marched right into his face. One of the chief charms of sport is its uncertainty, and yet this charm is sometimes little appreciated. It is a common-place that a woman, inexperienced and sometimes perhaps indifferent, often hooks the heaviest salmon of a season. So it is with the rifle; we heard a strange story bearing on this in Kashmir. The snow-leopard, while not a very rare animal, does not often come into close contact with hunters on the high ground, and is very seldom killed; men may spend the shooting seasons of many years in his haunts, after ibex and markhor, and never happen to come across him. Yet not long ago a novice, with little or no experience of big game shooting, paid an early visit to the place where he had left one of these animals the previous night, to secure the head, and found two of the most beautiful of all the cat tribe making their breakfasts off it—and shot them both. I think that here any congratulations from the

old scourers of the mountains would be altogether wanting in sincerity.

Kashmir is a paradise for sportsmen who are keen and strong and willing to do hard work, and not greedy about numbers. Indeed, big bags of game are not to be had by anyone now ; there is a strict limit for *Ovis Ammon* and ibex and markhor—a wise ordinance, but one which shows how much more artificial sport is becoming even in the wild places of the world. So quality is sought for, and this, with luck, may be very fine.

We hardly think of trout in connection with India, but they have been introduced into the swift-running spring-fed streams of Kashmir, and unborn anglers will owe a great debt of gratitude to Major Wigram. For years he has been developing the fishing, and the splendid trout which are so plentiful in many of the rivers and burns owe their existence to ova from Scotland introduced by him. We saw one of his hatcheries at Srinagar, and I am afraid to say what the weight of the biggest fish in it was.

Settling up at Traal was rather a complicated business. I was armed with a huge bagful of rupees, and, thanks to kind warnings, knew pretty well how to remunerate the staff. But it did seem to me, when the time came for this work, that they had largely increased in numbers during the week, and I think small presents were made to a good many worthy men, whose only claim for consideration was that they were distant relations of our followers. Nearly all begged or demanded notes of recommendation, 'chits' as they are called, and writing these with a bad pen and worse ink on flimsy paper, by the aid of an indifferent interpreter and a dim oil-lamp, took a long time and almost drove me distracted. At last we got off, and exchanged the hay-carpeted hut with its pleasant memories for the luxury of Major Wigram's charming house at Srinagar.

So my sport was over ; I was only allowed one stag. Two shots in nearly a week of very hard work. But as one gets older the wish to make heavy bags often decreases ; variety is sought for rather than numbers ; big pheasant days, and especially very big rabbit days, lose much of their charm. I wonder if many other sportsmen feel a little satisfaction in now and then sparing a rabbit ? You see his hunched form in a tuft of rushes, and perhaps catch his eye—though, indeed, if your eye meets his he will very likely bolt from his hiding-place. If the beaters on either side do not notice him, I like to spare that rabbit ; leave him in peace in his seat.

Sympathy with the little creature has something to do with this, and also, perhaps, another feeling. Perhaps, in some future sphere that small animal may be a big and strong and fierce one ; compensation may be dealt out to him for that little part he has played in this world—for his insignificance and feebleness—and the man with the gun now may take his humble place. So the grace that was shown him may some day be extended to you. At such a time it is a trouble to me to see a lynx-eyed boy thrust a stick into the rushes, and force the little rabbit out—‘to join in the fun.’ Even then a blind eye can be turned to his scurrying form.

This is really a bastard sort of sympathy—a poor kind of sentimentalism,—to be rightly sneered at by true sportsmen, and it is certainly not a topic to enlarge on to one’s host in the smoking-room. And the thing cuts two ways. I have never willingly spared a good stag, though I have let off many a poor one. How, then, about the revenge that that wild race may take in the great day of fury and trampling ?

GILFRID W. HARTLEY.

THE ASSISTED PILGRIM.

MRS. SQUANCE had not been to bed all night.

Just as a loving, heart-broken friend may keep vigil by the bedside of one about to pass away, so through the long hours Sally Squance sat with eyes fixed on the object of her love, soon to be hers no more. Dawn was not yet, though over Beeston was stealing a glimmer of the light of early morning—blast furnaces still made orange circles on the smoke-laden sky, and the tramp of the night shift going home echoed on the pavements.

Sally drew her shawl closer about her, for the chill which heralds day had in some mysterious way penetrated her all-night closed-up room. The feeble light of the lamp whose oil was running low barely illuminated the table on which it stood, only a glowing ring brightened the ceiling above it, for the rest the room was in shadowy darkness save for the mantelshelf, where two candles, burning low, made an altar in the darkness. Between these guttering candle-ends stood a china dog of the spaniel type, white china, with coal black ears and points, and beady black eyes which stared into the room with a fixed look of astonishment—something was about to happen. . . . What? Ever and anon the eyes were lit by the flicker of the draught-driven candles as they reflected themselves in the glazed surface of the body, and this reflection seemed to make a glow about the head which brought to Mrs. Squance's memory the haloes of pictured saints.

A candle spluttered in its swimming grease and remained but a curl of smoke ascending to be lost in the overhead darkness. The other candle fired the paper at its socket and flared, and then it was that the beady eyes became full of light and stared down at the little old woman rocking in her chair. The quick illumination caused Mrs. Squance to sit bolt upright in her seat, hands stretched towards the altar. But as with the first candle so with the second, grease drowned the flame, and again there was a splutter and smoke encircling the dog's head; but the sudden glare which had startled Mrs. Squance was soon gone; the china dog in the dim light was left but as a ghost of himself, and his owner again sank huddled in her chair, her head bent low as she covered her face with her grey, vein-knotted hands.

So she remained, an inanimate heap, only a tremor in a bugle of her bonnet showed that she was in the grip of real, if restrained, emotion.

Mrs. Squance had had her bonnet on all night, also her black cape with beads ; a shaggy fur was round her neck—she was, in fact, dressed for a journey, and save that her button boots stood warming on the hearth she was all in readiness for a start. Presently a hooter sounded over Beeston, then another buzzer penetrated the stillness of the room, and already the feet of the day shift going to work were pattering on the wet pavements outside. Grey light stole into the room through the holes in the torn blind. Mrs. Squance let her hands fall into her lap, and she raised her eyes to the china dog now returning to its china whiteness, its staring eyes looking out into the room, inanimate as, save during this one terrible night, they had been for the last five-and-twenty years. Illusion fled with daylight ; the woman got hold of herself, as it were ; she took the poker and raked the dust from the cinders, and with a hairpin from her knob of grey hair scraped the grease from out the sockets of the brass candlesticks, and dropped the ends into the embers that still glowed in the grate. She threw on a few scraps of wood, a little coal, and soon the fire kindled to a blaze.

With a sigh that was as the morning breeze lamenting over Beeston, she laid her hands on the china dog and rested them there a moment before she took the animal off the mantelshelf and set it on the table. Then from a drawer in her dresser she produced a large piece of cotton wadding, into which she reverently laid and wrapped the dog. She folded brown paper round it, but it made a difficult parcel, for Mrs. Squance, though excellent at charring, had no qualifications as a packer ; still, by dint of using much string she succeeded in inducing the paper to cover the wadding as the wadding had covered the dog.

It was now nearly light, and Sally Squance drew up her blind and let in the bleak grey of a sunless March morning. She turned the lock of her door and drew back a bolt, but she did not open door or window. Hard enough to keep the cold out, you didn't want it indoors. 'Open winders be for them as can afford 'em, I can't,' she would have told you.

Turning from the view of the drab street with the still glimmering gas-lamps she looked at her mantelshelf, and there was an emptiness about it which appalled her. Instinct urged her to fill the place

left vacant by the dog, and she lifted a rose-decked, broken-spouted teapot to the shelf, but she put it back with a shake of the head. Then she noticed that the base of the dog had left its shape in the dust of the mantelpiece, and a sudden inspiration drove her to pick up a pronged fork, and with the point scratch in the dust the outline the base had left. It would be something to have that remaining . . . something to come back to when the renunciation was completed—when she returned from the journey she was about to take.

'I'll just fresh myself up,' was her thought, and she went through the door to what she called her scullery: the few inches of concreted floor which held a tiny sink. She had had a good wash the evening before when she dressed herself for her journey, and had used much bar soap. She used no soap now, but wetting the corner of her roller towel she rubbed her cheeks over in the manner of a cat washing its face. She was about to tie the strings of her bonnet when the action was arrested by a sound; so she made a hurried journey back to the kitchen and seized the parcel from the table and carried it into the scullery.

'I don't trust you, Tilly Pink,' she muttered. 'Ah, I thought so,' she added as the street door opened and a young woman with a shawl over her head stepped into the room (at least she would have been a young woman if she had not looked so old—white of face, hollow-cheeked, with black rings beneath her eyes and bloodless thin lips). Through the half-open scullery door Mrs. Squance watched her, noiseless with slipped feet, creep to the mantelshelf, one hand outstretched.

'Keep your 'ands off, Tilly, dearie, you mustn't touch,' she called out.

'Can't I 'ave 'im whilst you're away?' the girl called back. 'Oh!' she ejaculated as her eyes fell on the empty shelf and she sank disconsolately into the chair by the fire.

Mrs. Squance, finishing the tying of her bonnet strings, shook her head. 'No, you can't, dearie, you tried to steal'—altering the accusation—'tried to take him last week. Girls in your condition 'as their fancies, I knows, so I won't say you stole him, dearie. God knows I'd give 'im to you if I could.'

'Orlright,' said Tilly mechanically, fixing fascinated eyes on the spot where the dog had stood, 'I on't try to take him no more; but, oh, I would give worlds o' gold to 'ave 'im for my boy when 'e comes.' There was a whimper in her voice, and her thin white

hands and thinner arms cracked as she encircled her knees with them, and from the bent head tears fell into her lap. 'You once 'alf promised 'im to me,' she added reproachfully.

'Aye, but I didn't know I was going to be a pilgrim then.'

'What's that got to do with it, Mrs. Squance, cos you are a pilgrim? What's a pilgrim, anyways? Sound like them men as walks by a 'earse.'

'A pilgrim is them as goes to 'oly places, dearie. And I be going to Alf's grave over in France.'

'And 'tis me as should be going and all, seeing as 'ow I was to 'ave been Alf's wife,' said the girl bitterly.

'But you're Pink's wife now, dearie, and a good 'usband you've got. And 'tis 'is child you're going to 'ave . . . and when it comes you'll be 'appy and give over mourning for Alf. As Alf's mother I feels for you, Tilly'—and Mrs. Squance laid her hand with rough tenderness on the girl's thin arm—'but Alf was a pal of Pink's who 'eld 'im when 'e died, and 'twould please 'im to think of you as 'is wife as I've told you times out o' number. It was as if Alf left you in 'is will to Pink. And now 'e's given you a child you must be 'appy so as to be fair to 'im.'

'I know, I know,' the girl replied with a wail, 'but all the time I keeps saying it orter be Alf's child.'

'Fancies, dearie, girls as you be now are always full of fancies.'

'If my little 'un could 'ave your china dog to play with, same as Alf 'ad it, might be 'twould give 'im some of 'is nature,' said Tilly insinuatingly.

'Fancies, dearie, fancies,' said Mrs. Squance kindly.

'P'raps when 'e comes you'll think different. I shall name 'im Alf, and then maybe you'll alter your mind,' persisted Tilly.

Sally Squance slowly shook her head: 'It's 'ard, Tilly, 'orrid 'ard, but it's no use your coming . . .'

'I ain't coming, and you needn't 'ave put 'im away thinking I would take 'im when you was gone, so there,' Tilly flung out angrily, her eyes on the empty spot which tacitly accused her of crime. But the older woman appeared to notice no offence in the words, but answered cheerfully: 'Now I be going to 'ave a coop of tea afore I starts, and then I'll come in to yours and say good-bye.'

Tilly gathered her flannel jacket about her thin chest. From the door she flung back over her shoulder: 'All the same, 'tis I as should be going as pilgrim to Alf's grave.'

But as Mrs. Squance *was* the pilgrim, she felt the remark called for no contradiction, and when the girl had closed the door behind her she went into the scullery to see the parcel which she had so happily hidden. Yes, the string still held, the knots were taut—the bundle satisfied her. Tilly would never guess; even if she came to the station with her she would think it was clothes as in the other parcel. She made herself some tea and ate some bread-and-butter. The deed was done; the resolution made weeks ago was an accomplished fact, and with a face wreathed in smiles she looked at the empty space on her mantelshelf without blanching.

She took up her umbrella and bag and, parcel under either arm, stepped forth, and with umbrella handle beat on Tilly Pink's door. 'Come to the station, Tilly,' she shouted gaily, 'and see the pilgrim off.'

II

It was all as Mrs. Squance had been told—she had been met, assisted, directed, fed, posted on from London to Calais, from Calais to Amiens, where she alighted. As she clambered from the carriage on to the low platform a lady touched her on the shoulder, a lady bearing on her arm an enamel badge with the figure of St. Barnabas engraved upon it, and the word *Consolation* running round it. It is a badge that makes all French officialism and formality to melt as snow; railway officers, ticket collectors, *douaniers*, recognise it and make things easy for the wearers. *La dame de St. Barnabas, mais oui, Madame . . . !* and gates at which crowds wait the will of an official open and close behind the lady whose duty it is to meet a pilgrim.

'You are Mrs. Squance, I think,' said the lady of St. Barnabas, shaking the little charwoman's hand. 'I am here to see after you, and you will be in my charge till you leave Amiens to go home. Let me carry one of your parcels.'

Mrs. Squance tucked the smaller parcel more tightly than ever under her arm, but fearing that her escort might be hurt at the rejection of her proffered assistance she pushed the bigger bundle into the outstretched hand. So without hindrance at the barrier or in the *douane* they passed out into the streets of Amiens.

It might be thought that Mrs. Squance thus suddenly thrust into a crowded, bustling foreign town of thronged streets, crackings of carters' whips, shouts and strange cries of people selling fruit,

flowers, vegetables and all kinds of merchandise from barrows, would have shown some surprise. The foreign tongue which must have sounded so much gibberish in her ears might have astonished her. But no, she seemed to take it all for granted, and complacently trotted by the side of the St. Barnabas lady, and when her guide pointed to the stately pile and said: 'That is the cathedral,' she showed no enthusiasm, and merely answered: 'Yes, Miss; thank you, Miss.'

The hostel at which the pilgrims are entertained without distinction of class or denomination had once been a fine mansion of the Louis-Quatorze period, and big gates, with a small gate in one of them to admit foot passengers, guarded a wide courtyard. The façade had an importance which would have awed a person unaccustomed to the magnificence of residences built for French dukes, and the grandeur of the iron gates might have spelt wonderment to a woman used to the wooden doors of a street in Beeston, but Mrs. Squance walked through it all without comment and probably without observation. Nor did the airy *salle-à-manger*, white-panelled, with pillars with gold ornamentation, and a magnificent carved mantelpiece, twice as high as herself, arrest attention. Everything was taken for granted, all was as it should be, only her beaming face showed that nothing in that fine-proportioned room with the painted ceiling jarred on her feelings, nor did the view at the end of it, seen through immense glass doors, of an old-fashioned garden with tubs of hydrangeas standing on the pavement disturb a woman accustomed to a few feet of backyard decorated with an overflowing dustbin. Mrs. Squance walked up the winding black oak staircase as if all her life she had been used to one of its width and size, and the bedroom with its highly polished floor and snow-white linen which had been allotted to her called for no remark save the frequently repeated: 'Oh, thank you, Miss.'

Nor was Mrs. Squance abashed when she took her place at dinner at the long table about which several other pilgrims, a clergyman and his wife, one or two country people whom the war had left poor, and the staff of the hostel, had seated themselves. One thing, however, did cause some trepidation: Mrs. Squance's dentures refused to manipulate the crusty portion of the long French bread which had fallen to her share. But in the hostel the comfort of the inmates is the first consideration of the staff, and at once an observant lady noticed Mrs. Squance's dilemma and said Mrs. Squance would like some softer bread. 'Oh, thank

you, Miss,' was the acknowledgment as the equivalent of an English loaf was produced.

'We shall have to start in the motor at six o'clock, it is a long drive to your particular cemetery,' said the lady of the station. 'So you won't mind being wakened early—and I hope you will have a good night.'

'Oh, thank you, Miss.'

No one but Mrs. Squance was going that morning to the British Military Cemetery, Group 4, so she alone occupied the Henry Ford which her guide of yesterday drove. She took with her her usual immobility, and the miles of devastated country through which they sped, with its torn and spoilt earth, its stumps of trees and scarred soil, its roadside piled with reels of rusty barbed wire and scrap iron, its pathetically abandoned tanks, wheels and limbers of guns, and here and there heaps of rotting boots, coats, blankets, tarpaulins, and even the occasional ribs of dead horses, seen in the early morning light, with the dew of heaven making all this shell-pocked country stand out hard and plain as a map, provoked no word of astonishment. Amazed at the silence, the lady called attention to the dumps littering the blasted country, but 'Yes, Miss,' 'Thank you, Miss,' 'No, Miss,' were all the answers she got. Once or twice as she rattled Henry Ford along the empty road she stole a glance at her impassive fare: all she saw was a little old woman tightly holding a bundle to her breast, and a face which grew more and more satisfied as the miles were left behind.

The lady thought she knew them all—these pilgrims whom it was her business to drive to their trysting-places with the dead. They differed somewhat in the impressions formed, but there were few who with the mind's eye did not see the bursting shells, the vile mud, and the squalor in which their dear ones had died. It takes but little imagination even now to fill in the landscape with the hideous noise, the suffocating fumes, the rain, the mud, the oaths, the cruelty of it all, and their faces blanch as they approach the cemetery, with its rows and rows and rows of wooden crosses, arms all but touching, so close they stand, weathered now so that they look as if silvered by a hoar frost or as if a giant spider had spun a web on grass with neat precision—a web of death, dewed in the morning light with tears.

The cemetery to which the lady of St. Barnabas drove her charge was a small one and unfinished: it contained but fifteen

hundred graves. Though her journey was often made twice a week, she had never grown insensible to the horror of the shell-shattered country, empty of buildings, where here and there farm hands were ploughing, trying to smooth down the ridges, and again make possible for cultivation what had once been a prosperous holding. She saw the broken stumps of a wood showing like grinning teeth, and she had had to comfort and assure many a pilgrim who, staring at the desolation, had asked incredulously: 'How can we be certain his grave is here?' 'Your card, you see. Group so-and-so, row so-and-so, grave number so-and-so, there can be no mistake.' Just like specimens in a collector's cabinet they think—oh, well . . . !

But with Mrs. Squance it was altogether different. Perhaps because round Beeston (the only country she knew) the land is devastated by the slag heaps of mines, rusty boilers left here and there, old wheels, and all the broken iron refuse that defies destruction. Perhaps she saw nothing, perhaps her mind—and this the lady conjectured from her wrapt but happy expression—was fixed on something she was about to do, some joy she had been anticipating with fierce expectation—something greater than the mere pleasure of seeing Alf's grave. Her face was wreathed in smiles: it was as the sunshine now illuminating the Somme.

'Is he among them?' she asked as they drew near to the wire-surrounded burying-ground. She laid her brown paper parcel on her lap, and with wash-tub crinkled finger and thumb began plucking at the knots in the string she had so tightly tied the night of her Beeston vigil. So secure had she made them that presently her loose and gappy teeth had to be brought into requisition, and she bent her head into her lap as if browsing on the brown paper and its contents.

The lady of St. Barnabas, at the desire of her fares, had frequently—usually—stopped at a flower shop before leaving Amiens for a sheaf of tulips, or roses, or whatever flower might be in season. She tried to keep the pilgrims from the purple-and-white beaded wreaths so beloved of the French by pointing out how soon they rusted, but if the seller was too insistent and the buyer too greatly attracted she would compromise on the little wreath of rubber violets which, the shopkeeper insisted, well stood the weather because they were rubber. But Mrs. Squance had shown no desire for any of these things . . . yet this parcel her old hands plucked at must contain some votive offering. What?

'Here we are, Mrs. Squance,' and the car was stopped at a path leading from the road on which a large board announced :

British Military. Group IV.
Pop-Pop Corner.

'Oh, thank you, Miss,' and for one who suffered from rheumatism Mrs. Squance stepped from the car with great alacrity. 'Oh, this is nice,' she added, happiness exuding from her.

'Now let me see your card again. Yes, Plot B, Row 15, Grave 194. This way.'

There is a six-foot alleyway of grass between each row of crosses, kept mown, on which to walk. No actual graves are shown by mounds or in any way marked off; under the close mown turf the bodies lie, and the cross alone shows the head of the grave. In front of the crosses run narrow beds of flowers, making pleasant ribs of colour between the alleyways of grass, and on each cross is a tin ticket, indelibly stamped.

'Here we are,' and the lady pointed :

I.W.G.C. 194.
Private A. G. Squance.
Machine Gun Corps.

Thus generally ended the duties of the lady of St. Barnabas. She would bow and walk on a few paces so as to leave her charge undisturbed in her grief, that most poignant shy, silent grief—the bowed knee, the inarticulate moving lips telling the beloved : 'Darling, I have come,' and then the placing with shaking hands of the offering of flowers at the bottom of the cross. At these moments pilgrims are most at ease—alone. Not so Mrs. Squance.

'Could you 'elp, Miss,' came in her excited voice, for even her wobbly teeth were proving of no avail with the last knot. A penknife cut the string. 'I've brought this 'ere, Miss, 'twas Alf's when he was a tot of a boy, stood on our mantel it 'as for five-and-twenty years. He loved it then, he loved it when 'e was growed-up, and the last night of 'is leave afore he went away—he was thinking o' being married, Miss—'e took it up and said : "You'll let me 'ave 'im, won't you, Mother, for my little 'ome ?" His china dawg, Miss,' and out of its wrappings, in all its china loveliness of black and white, stony eyes staring across the desolation of France as they had stared into the mother's desolate room, came Mrs. Squance's offering, her—no, Alf's—china dog.

'I knowed 'e'd like that with 'im better than anything in the world,' she added.

'But what are you going to do with it?' broke in the lady of St. Barnabas.

'Plant it, Miss, under the cross. No, not bury it, Miss, plant it so that it watches over 'im as it did on the mantel when he was a tiny boy, or when he was playing with it on the floor. It never broke then, look, not so much as a chip, and he did 'is teething on it, too, and it will last for ever out 'ere, it's china and the weather can't hurt it.'

From another paper wrapping Mrs. Squance produced a new trowel, and with the help of the lady of St. Barnabas she cut a hole in the ground beneath the cross, and neatly and reverently the china dog was planted up to its neck, the earth firmly patted down around it and the turf replaced.

A sigh of relief escaped Mrs. Squance's lips as she looked with satisfaction at her performance. She rose from her kneeling position and gazed at the now planted dog, its stiff neck stretched upwards from the earth, its glassy eyes more than ever full of wonderment at finding itself so far from the familiar mantelshelf. It produced the effect of being held down against its will, and reproachful eyes followed its mistress as she walked to the car with the lady of St. Barnabas to seek the lunch St. Barnabas had provided. 'Don't he look beautiful, just, Miss?' she demanded, pointing with the sandwich out of which she had bitten a crescent. 'Who would 'ave thought 'e would 'ave ended 'is days 'ere, or, for the matter o' that, who would 'ave thought either of 'em would 'ave ended their days 'ere, seem like fate, don't it? But they're both together now and that's everything to me, thank God!'

'But are you not sorrowful at parting with your treasure?' asked the lady. 'Of course it will be all right here, no one will touch it—but giving it up . . . ?'

'Ah, Miss, 'twas the night afore I left Beeston that I parted with him. I sat up with 'im all night, I did, and it was 'ard, but when you give you must give with both 'ands. Besides, 'is eyes 'ad been watching for Alf's return till that well-nigh drove me crazy, and I said to 'im: "If Alf can't come back to you, why I'll take you to Alf." And I've done it and I'm 'appy,' and a laugh rang out which showed that the giver in the joy of this happy moment had forgotten the long, lonely years that were to follow. 'Some folk might jeer and say that's Sally Squance! But it's me

as 'as the laugh now; lor! I feel that pleased that I *can* laugh once more . . . !'

The lady of St. Barnabas said nothing, but she laid a very tender hand on the hand of Mrs. Squance that was unoccupied by sandwich.

'And, please, before I go I would like to send a picture postcard to Tilly so as she sees they are together again at last. Maybe as that'll cheer her up a bit. She wanted that dawg, poor dear,' and Mrs. Squance shook her head sadly, reminiscent of the pain her refusal had inflicted.

The car moved off with Mrs. Squance standing upright in it, and it had gone some long distance before she sat down, for in the sunlight the china head of the dog, set amidst the rows of crosses, winked and blinked a farewell to the pilgrim who had left him—given him back to Alf.

CHARLES FIELDING MARSH.

SONGS MY NURSES TAUGHT ME.

A FOOTNOTE TO ENGLISH SONGS OF THE 'NINETIES

BY ANGELA THIRKELL.

Do nurses sing now as they used ? All through my early childhood the time between tea and bed was filled in winter with nurses' songs. The tea-things were cleared away and our toys brought out onto the hearth-rug, and the fire glowed in the grate—a proper grate it was, made of two semicircles, the lower one supporting on its dome the other semicircle couchant, with its legs in the air as it were, and a hob on each side, where the nursery kettle could simmer ; none of your gas fires or modern barless grates down on the ground, but a real grate, blackleaded every morning and lavish in consumption of coal. Through the bars of the high nursery fender, with its brass rim, we stared into red caverns, while we dug little pieces surreptitiously out of the pattern on the cork carpet and the Nanny of the day sang and sang and we with her. The repertoire of our Nannies covered every kind of song : sentimental, didactic, comic, religious, and, what was to us by far the most thrilling, songs with a story.

The memory of a child between five and seven, a memory still savage and unspoilt in its tenaciousness, made all those songs its own, misquotations and all, hoarding them quite unconsciously, and a verse or a line serves now to call up the warm fire-lit nursery and the gas lamp shining from the street through the winter fog and the noise of horses stamping their way to bed in the big stables next door. There was a sentimental song, very popular at the time, which I used to think was written about nursery evenings.

'Just a song at twilight,
When the lights are low,
And the flickering shadows
Softly come and go.
Though the heart be weary,
Sad the day and long,
Still to us at twilight
Comes Love's old, sweet song.'

Another song, which to me was written about our fire-lit

evenings and summer holidays, was a dismal, wandering tune with long drawn-out vowels.

'Where is now the happy party
I remember long ago,
Seated round the Christmas fi'er,
Brightened by its ruddy glow ;
Or in summer's balmy evenings
In the fields among the hay ?
They are all dispersed and wandered,
Far away, far away.'

It used to make Nanny cry, and we choked sympathetically ; and we choked again over a song of which I remember nothing but this chorus :

' You take to the boats, lads,
You save your lives,
I've no one to love me,
You've children and wives.
You take to the boats, lads,
Pray to Heaven above ;
But I'll go down in the angry deep
With the ship I love.'

There is a baldness and bathos about the words of many of these songs which is almost too marked to account wholly for their vast popularity. There was a song, dating from the first bicycle craze, whose chorus permeated England, and is doubtless still familiar to many.

'Daisy, Daisy,
Give me an answer, do.
I'm half crazy
All for the love of you.
It won't be a stylish marriage,
For I can't afford a carriage,
But you'll look sweet
Upon the seat
Of a bicycle made for two.'

But not so many people know the verse, which for paucity of thought and feeble triviality of rhyme and rhythm is hard to beat :

'In our town there is a flower,
Daisy, Daisy.
In our town there is a flower,
Dear little Daisy Bell.

Whether she loves me or loves me not,
Oh ! it is hard to tell ;
Yet I am longing to share her lot,
Dear little Daisy Bell.'

One can see Daisy, with her hard straw hat well tilted forward over the curled fringe, and the voluminous and uncomfortable, but highly daring, bloomers.

Hardly less amiably foolish is the beginning of 'Sweet Marie' (pronounced Mah-ree), a song whose name only meant Marie biscuits to me, and puzzled me considerably.

' When I hold your hand in mine,
Sweet Marie,
A feeling most divine
Comes to me :
All the world feels full of spring,
Full of warblers on the wing,
And I listen while they sing,
Sweet Marie.'

The chorus contains a touching tribute to moral charms as contrasted with physical, but I can't ever think that Marie liked it.

' Sweet Marie, come to me,
Come to me, sweet Marie,
Not because your face is fair, love, to see,
But your soul, so pure and sweet,
Makes my happiness complete,
And I falter at your feet,
Sweet Marie.'

Rhyme was never a difficulty. What didn't rhyme had at least enough of a jingle in it to satisfy the nursery ear. All the same, I have never succeeded in saying the following lines quite as I would wish :

' White wings will never grow wearily,
Carry me safely over the sea ;
Night comes, I long for thee, dearie ; I'll
Spread out my white wings and fly home to thee.'

The religious motif bulks large in all well-regulated nurseries. All our Nannies taught us hymns, but Annie was the only one who put ecstasy into her religious songs. She was a mild, fair-haired creature, and soon proved unequal to the task of coping

with two strong children, but before she went she had planted firmly in my memory the following hymn, or ode, of a revivalist nature :

‘ O, Beulah Land, O, Beulah Land,
Upon the highest rock I stand,
And look away across the sea,
Where mansions are prepared for me,
And view the white and shining shore,
My heaven and home for evermore.’

My mother must have been very unlucky with nurses when I was small, for until Nanny, who was *NANNY par excellence*, came to us to take charge of my baby sister, six years younger than I, there was a constant procession of changing Nannies. I never knew, of course, why they went, but I see myself shrieking with rage at each new Nanny, and then adopting her with equal vehemence. There was fair-haired Annie, and Ada who had a beaky nose and was described by me as having ‘ a good voice for a high clamour,’ and many others, but the only other who stands out is ‘ Darkie,’ who specialised in comic songs. The song of hers that most delighted a nursery audience was called simply ‘ Ha-ha, he-he ! ’ It related the adventures of a ‘ blade ’ or ‘ spark ’ who deceived and left in the lurch at various times five-and-twenty girls, a butcher and a cabman. Presumably he offered marriage to the five-and-twenty girls, and didn’t settle the butcher’s account, and I know that the cabman’s fare was left unpaid, for the ‘ cabby ’ will

‘ have to wait till his horse drops dead,
And white hairs grow on the black man’s head.’

The chorus, which has a certain elemental grandeur, consists of the following chant :

‘ Ha-ha, he-he ! I’m not going back you see,
And if anybody knows a thing or two,
It’s me, me, me, me, me, me :
Ha-ha, he-he ! I’m not going back you see,
And if anybody knows a thing or two,
It’s me, me, me, me, me.’

I imagine this song to have been introduced to an admiring world by a lion *comique*, if they still existed in the ‘nineties. Perhaps the same dashing gentleman was responsible for the

popularity of a really quite vulgar song which ran riot in our nursery for several months.

'She was a dear little dicky-bird,
 Cheep, cheep, cheep she went,
 Sweetly she sang to me
 Till all my money was spent.
 Then she went off song,
 And we parted on fighting terms,
 She was one of the early birds,
 And I was one of the worms.'

It would be unnecessary to enlarge upon the merits of 'We're a rare old, fair old, rickety, racketty crew,' or 'Oh, Flo!' as they are classics now; but there comes to my mind a comic song which is less widely known, called 'A Mr. Brown': or it may be that 'A Mr. Brown' was only what the name of the song was *called*, and the song really *was* 'Sweet Belle Mahone'; but it has that quality of mysterious irrelevance which children love. It was sung to us by a temporary nurse, dear Scotch Mary. She was not with us long, and in her next place she began to show a love for strong drink which we had not suspected. Affairs came to a crisis in the new place one day, when Mary, emerging from the local public-house after her morning draught, met on the doorstep her master, who had also a slight weakness in that direction, going in for his. She melted away from our lives after that, but I treasure this song, sung with a pretty Scotch accent and more 'r's' than I dare write:

'A Mrr. Brrown, a frriend of mine,
 On an expedition went,
 To see what quarterr of the globe
 The Norrth Pole could be found.

Chorus—

'But he neverr cam' back, he neverr cam' back,
 He's up therre all alone,
 Singing "Wait forr me at the Golden Gate,
 Sweet Belle Mahone."

'He went along, thrrough the ice and snow,
 Till a Rrussian bearr he met.
 The bearr was hungry, and Paddy was a-missing—
 And the Norrth Pole's not found yet.

*Chorus—*But he neverr cam' back, etc.'

The sudden appearance of Mr. Brown as Paddy has never been explained, and I still am not sure whether the Golden Gate alluded to Heaven or San Francisco. I think it was Mary who also introduced to us a song whose authorship Polonius might not have disclaimed :

‘Waste not, want not, is the maxim I would teach,
Let your watchword be dispatch and practise what you
preach,
Never let your chances like the sunbeams pass you by :
You’ll never miss the water till the well runs dry.’

All I can remember of the body of the song is this verse :

‘Years rolled on, and I became a mischief-loving boy,
Destruction was my one delight, it was my only joy ;
But every night when bedtime came, and tired of childish
play,
My mother took me on her knee—I’d hear her gently say :
“Waste not, want not,” etc.

Of all the songs we sang, those with a story impressed us most. Some we got from Nanny ; some, I think, from a very nice cook and house-parlourmaid called Phyllis and Prissie. We took them with us one summer to a little cottage we had taken in Surrey for the holidays, and I slept with them, and one night I woke up and heard them discussing a novelette in which the villain had pushed the hero ‘down the shaft.’ It took me literally years to understand how this could be, and I think of it yet as being on a par with the camel and the needle’s eye. Phyllis rent the foundations of laughter in us by calling the flying beetles, which made twilight horrible, ‘wobbly wazzies’—their local name, which she had misheard, being ‘startly boozies.’ Prissie used to let us pretend that we were Wilson making his last stand, and she was the Zulus, while she was cleaning the staircase on Friday mornings, which strikes me now as unusually kind. She had a brother who had been in South Africa, and when he admitted, under pressure, that Kaffir children were more the colour of my brother’s shoes, which were dull black, than like mine, which were patent leather. I yelled aloud with rage and jealousy.

‘After the Ball’ and ‘Two Little Girls in Blue’ lived so long as waltzes that their tunes must be still fairly familiar. ‘Two Little Girls in Blue’ makes a good plunge into the story.

'The old man gazed on a photograph,
And tears bedewed his eye.
His nephew chanced to be standing there,
And asked him the reason why.
"Oh, listen my boy," the old man said,
"To a story that's strange and true:
Your father and I at school one day
Met two little girls in blue."

The chorus has a fine swing :

'Two little girls in blue, lad ;
Two little girls in blue.
They were sisters, and we were brothers,
And learned to love the two.
One little girl in blue, lad,
Who won your father's heart,
Became your mother, I married the other,
But now we have drifted apart.'

The relationships are certainly a little complicated and perhaps accounted for the drifting apart, though I have forgotten the precise manner in which the drift took place. But it was quite uneventful compared with the heart-rending misunderstandings in 'After the Ball.' The story of 'After the Ball' opens by one of the most unpleasant, artless *enfants terribles* that can ever have existed inquiring as follows :

'Our little maiden climbed on th' old man's knees,
Begged for a story, "Do, Uncle, please.
Why are you single ? Why live alone ?
Have you no babies ? Have you no home ? "'

A more tactless set of questions can seldom have been put to an uncle, but th' old man was evidently used to that sort of thing—the equivalent at that time of 'What did you do in the Great War, Daddy ?' one supposes—for instead of saying 'Get on with that something bun,' he settled himself comfortably and let loose in the following words :

'"I had a sweetheart, long years ago,
Where she is now, pet, you soon will know ;
If you'll listen to my story, I'll tell you all,
'Twas I broke her heart, pet, after the ball."

Chorus (in a rollicking waltz time) :

'After the ball is over, after the break of dawn,
After the dancers are leaving, after the stars have
shawn (poetical licence for shone),
Many a heart is breaking, if we could see them all,
And many a hope is shattered, after the ball.'

What events those balls of the 'nineties must have been, where so much could happen in one evening. No wonder he went to the ball with misgivings, which were, alas! too fully justified. During an interval, when he and the sweetheart were sitting out, she said, 'I want some water; leave me alone.' This made him deeply suspicious, especially as he had seen her talking to a man earlier in the evening. However, he went to get the water—but this should be told in his own poignant words :

'When I returned, pet, I saw That Man
Kissing my sweetheart as lovers can,
Then down fell the glass, pet, broken—that's all,
Just as my heart was, after the ball.'

Of course he took the only sensible course and rushed away, and they never met again and both their hearts broke. Not for many, many years did he know how unjust his suspicions had been, but at length—

'a letter came from That Man,
He was her brother; thus the letter ran :
Now my story's ended, I've told you all,
'Twas I broke her heart, pet, after the ball.'

I should like to know more of a story which always terrified me, called 'The Gipsy's Warning,' in which the speaker, whom I presume to be the Gipsy, meets a couple walking out together, and at once bursts out :

'Do not trust him, gentle maiden,
Though his voice be soft and mild,'

and then goes on to explain that—

'Lady, in the green glade yonder
Sleeps the gipsy's only child,
Soon she perished, now she's sleeping
In the cold and lonely wild.'

One supposes that the gentleman was a betrayer.

Also would I like to know more of the lady, of whom it is simply told that—

‘Through the streets she wandered nightly,
Playing on her light guitar.’

I am still in doubt as to whether the instrument in question was one peculiarly suited to frivolous music, or merely a dwarf variety of small compass.

Two of the best story songs I am lucky enough to remember in their entirety. These are ‘Darling Mabel’ and ‘Sweetheart May,’ both splendid specimens of their class. ‘Darling Mabel’ is a light and slightly humorous song, and some ingenuity is shown in introducing the chorus afresh at the end of each verse.

‘Now Joe fell in love with sweet Mabel,
Dame Rumour, she said
They were going to get wed.
But somehow he never felt able
To speak when his loved one was nigh.
He’d blush like a rose when he met her,
And over each word
He would stammer absurd,
Till once in the form of a letter
He thought for her hand he’d apply.
So straightway he wrote
This businesslike note :

Chorus (in waltz time)—

‘Darling Mabel, now I’m able
To buy the happy home.
Since they raised my screw, love,
I’ve enough for two, love.
Will you marry ?
Do not tarry,
Answer yes or no.
I conclude with love and kisses,
Yours for ever, Joe.

‘Now Joe for his sweet Mabel’s answer
Would wait on the mat
For the postman’s rat-tat,
And wonder if she’d say “I can’t, Sir !”
Or promise to be his sweet wife.

He waited six months, growing thinner,
 Would sob and would sigh,
 And would pipe his blue eye,
 Go without eating breakfast or dinner—
 In fact he was tired of his life.
 In dreams he would quote
 That letter he wrote :
 ' Darling Mabel, etc.

' The sequel in haste to be stating,
 The truth for to tell,
 Mabel loved him quite well.
 Then why did she keep the chap waiting ?
 The answer's as plain as can be.
 Resolving his life for to end it,
 Within an old coat
 He discovered the note.
 Somehow he'd forgotten to send it ;
 He rushed off to Mabel in glee.
 Their wedding's to-day,
 He's found pluck to say :
 ' Darling Mabel,' etc.

' Sweetheart May ' is of a more sombre cast. The narrator, who, if not the village half-wit, appears to have possessed mental powers of about the same calibre, fell in love with a little girl—one of those boy-and-girl-friendships-destined-to-ripen-into-something-deeper.

' Long ago an angel I knew,
 If ever a one was seen.
 She was a bonnie sweet child of eight,
 And I was just eighteen.
 And every night she'd sit on my knee,
 Her arm round my neck, and say :
 " I love you, I love you, and when I grow big
 You'll promise to marry your May ? " '

Undeterred by the child's forward behaviour, he would invariably burst into the following depressing chorus :

(*Slow waltz time.*)
 ' Sweetheart May,
 You will grow up some day.

You will marry another, and
 My love betray ;
 But I'll wait for you, love,
 And then we shall see
 What you will say when I ask you to
 Mar-ry me.'

Instead of cultivating the plant of her affection he

' went away to a country far,
 Lands overseas to tread.
 Toils and troubles of life I knew
 As years rolled o'er my head.
 But every night I'd think of that child,
 Her laugh and her love's young smile,
 And I'd long to see her grown up, sweet eighteen,
 My May of the days gone by.

'Sweetheart May,' etc.

As his faithful heart turned towards the unpleasantly forward little girl, he determined to go home and see how the plant was doing.

' I came back at last, and I found my May
 A beautiful woman, full grown.
 I asked her to think of the old happy days,
 But memory was mine alone.'

Here any tact he ever had seems to have deserted him entirely, for :

' I sat down beside her and sang the old songs ;
 She couldn't recall them a bit.
 She said, " I forget you, besides we must part,
 For to-morrow I'm going to be wed." '

Which naturally leads to the chorus, ingeniously altered for the occasion :

' Sweetheart May,
 You have grown up to-day.
 You are going to marry another and
 My love betray.
 I've waited for you, love,
 And now I can see
 What you will say when I ask you to
 Mar-ry me.'

We invented some songs for ourselves too, but they were on a far lower level. One of us, inspired by 'Earl Haldane's Daughter,' composed a song to the tune of 'The First Good Joy that Mary had':

' It was Earl Haldane's daughter
Was looking o'er the sea.
When she was aware of a grim nightmare
Came sailing over the sea.
Came sailing over the sea-ea-ea,
Came sailing over the sea-ea-ea.
Her hair turned white,
This horrible sight,
This horrible sight to see.
' The grim nightmare, he seized her hair
And dragged her under the sea.
Her bubbles came up, bubb-bubbledy-bupp,
And that was the end of she.
And that was the end of she-ee-ee,
And that was the end of she-ee-ee.
Her bubbles came up, bubb-bubbledy-bupp,
And that was the end of she.'

Another long ballad was called 'Alice Wold.' It was varied every Sunday morning, the time consecrated for singing it, and so partook of the nature of an improvisation, the only two rules being that this strophe—

' Lament, lament, ye citizens fair,
She lies beneath the mould !
Lament, lament, ye citizens fair,
For poor Alice Wold ! '—

should be introduced at intervals; and the other that the bard should say at some point in the song:

' She was not turned into a stone,
But she was snatched up to the clouds,
Er-wer, er-wer, er-wer, er-wer,
A voice was heard to declare.'

At length we grew out of Nannies, and had French nursery-maids who were always incompetent and usually had tempers, and waged eternal war with my brother, who teased them and wouldn't talk French. The greatest character among them was Jeanne, who had an engaging habit of translating Monsieur liter-

ally, and at eight o'clock would call to my brother, ' Gentleman Denis, it ees time for your *bain*.' When taunted too much with being a frog or a Johnny Crapaud, she used to retort with—

' De la triste Angleterre,
 Ce pays de la bière,
 L'Anglais, grand voyageur,
 N'a pas amour au cœur.
 Et bien loin de se morfondre,
 Sous les brouillards de Londres,
 Le ciel dont il est épris
 Est celui de Paris.'

One summer we all went to stay with friends in a big house in Wiltshire, and Jeanne was made free of the august assembly in the housekeeper's room. One day we children were invited to tea there, and music was called for. Each of us had to play, or recite poetry, or sing, and I think the butler sang a song called 'Never push a man because he's going down a hill.' When Jeanne's turn came, she blushed pink, and sang an extremely chaste and pure song about a *jeune fille* who was asked to go for a short pleasure trip with a *jeune homme tout à fait bien*, and accompanied by *maman*, I feel certain. When they got on board, the *jeune homme* addressed the *jeune fille* in the following irreproachable language :

' Le ciel est pur, la mer est belle,
 Ça ne fait rien,
 Tenez-vous bien.
 Quand on n'a pas le pied marin
 On peut glisser, Mademoiselle.'

Let me finish with a fragment of song which Jeanne often had on her lips. The words sound incredible, but I write them just as I heard them dozens of times, with no attempt at excuse or explanation.

' Ze Frenchman's knees you alwiz must beware,
 Not zere, my chil'; not zere, my chil';
 Not zere, my chil'; not zere.'

THE HARD CRUST.

PEACE descended on the breakfast-room at Brock, and I was left alone. The doctor had taken himself off to the surgery, where I could hear him roaring a greeting to his patients, as he entered. How he ever kept one, it was difficult to imagine. I should have thought one experience of his loud and blustering manner would have been sufficient. Yet they came and came again; every morning there was a row waiting for him on the wooden bench along the surgery wall, ready to scrape to their feet with a subservient 'Good marnin', sirr' as soon as he opened the door.

He was a bachelor, and had lived alone in Brock House ever since he left the County Hospital. Whilst there, he had had, I believe, a considerable reputation as a surgeon, but that was forty years ago. Now he was growing an old man, but unlike the Port which came dusty and cobwebbed from his cellar, he had not mellowed with the years. When I was at school, I had often been sent to stay with him by my father, who had an affection for him which I never could understand. For each time I found him more formidable than the last. I had a pity for the villagers of Brock. Indeed, I think not one of them was not at heart afraid of him, except two old retainers who, in their respective strongholds, one in the stables and the other in the kitchen, had asserted and preserved their independence. Both had been with him all the time he had practised in Brock. Johnson had once been groom, and it was one of the surprises of my life when, on the doctor's buying a motor, he turned out to drive it in a green chauffeur's suit. In the kitchen, Emma, his old housekeeper, had long enjoyed an absolute though stormy reign. Her method of dealing with him was as simple as it was effective. For she met his loudest outbursts with complete and placid calm, and when sheer lack of breath compelled him to stop, would turn on him with a snort and a withering 'Ah, tha' fule!' which never failed to reduce him to impotent silence. During my holiday purgatory at Brock, these encounters had been my one delight. I could have hugged myself to see him sitting in his chair, growling over his pipe, 'Damn that woman! She doesn't know her place. I'll be rid of her to-morrow——' but he never was. To-morrow

generally found that both sides had forgotten the battle. But I found myself unable to imitate that philosophic calm. He had an uncanny knack of planting a barbed arrow. If I attempted to argue against one of his opinions, 'Pooh, boy,' he would fly out at me, 'when you're older, you'll know better'; and constant repetition had made that shaft most galling.

I had been so struck at breakfast, and sat over the paper in simmering but useless ferment, looking out vaguely at the noble view.

Brock House stands high at the end of the straggling village street, and I looked out across the valley of the Teme to the lizard-back of Bryngewood, over which Brown Clee thrust a curved hump of shoulder; on the one side I had a glimpse of the Stretton Hills, shimmering in the sun like a smudge of purple from a careless finger, and on the other the border-marches stretched in a cataract of woods of hills away to Leominster and Welsh Hay. A pleasant drift of summer incense from field and hedge came in through the open window.

I had almost forgotten the doctor, when I heard the surgery door violently jerked open and his loud voice angrily demanding of Johnson where he had put his other pair of spectacles. From the hall-door a resigned voice answered him :

'If you was to look be'ind yer, ye'd find 'em under Mrs. Jones's medicine, where ye put 'em this marnin'.'

'Well, damn it, man' (the irritable reply was flung through the hall like a cricket ball), 'why couldn't you say so before?'

I started guiltily in my chair. It was ten o'clock and I was to go for a motor ride with the doctor on his rounds. He had issued his orders like a colonel on parade. The fresh air would do me good : we were to start punctually at ten : 'and just you be ready by then, my boy. When I'm busy, I'm busy, and have no time to waste !'

I went out through the hall and stood ready at the front door. Johnson was fussing round the motor, polishing the brasses : hissing over it, as if he had a horse under his hands. He is as proud of the appearance of his car as he was of the horse and trap in which the doctor used to drive his rounds, and drives it with the most exquisite care.

I was not a moment too soon. A voice rumbled from the surgery, giving final instructions to some one invisible :

'Take that basin of soup to Mrs. Bebb,' it said, 'and tell her to eat it before she takes her medicine, and tell her to get out of

bed for an hour and look at the sunshine and think how much she has to be thankful for. Emma, where's my gloves ?'

A frenzied search ensued. At last they were found and he came out in a fine bustle. 'Ready ? Ready ?' he said to Johnson. 'Then come on and don't stop dawdling here, and you, boy, get in on t'other side and look sharp about it...'

We climbed into the car and Johnson started her off. Our road lay through some of the most lovely of this truly magical country. The lanes ran under our wheels, thick with white dust under the increasing sun. The hedges walled us in with a riot of honeysuckle and wild rose. We passed leisurely by Yarkle Mill, under the thatched roofs of Abdy into Marsend, lying in its hollow like a sleepy schoolboy, and out over Teme into the Wigmore road. I listened with drowsy contentment to the steady drone of the doctor's voice. I had no need to speak. He flowed serenely on, except for an occasional difficulty with his pipe, which would persist in going out, and each time Johnson, without ever looking round, stopped the car for him to relight it. He seemed to know instinctively the moment at which he was required to pull up. Possibly he saw out of the tail of his eye the doctor searching in his pockets for matches, which was the invariable prelude to a stop. I sat and listened with half an ear. A monstrous monologue it was, on medicine and the doctor's art, of which, as I dare say was only natural, he had a great opinion.

'The only profession, I tell you, that a man must really work at, if he's to be any good. It's all very well for you to go to Oxford and learn a little Greek. Any fool could do that. But medicine ! That's the real thing. . . .'

It seemed to me that at this point in the play the chorus interposed their line. So I said that I thought it was a fine profession ; that the doctor shared with the parson the distinction of devoting himself solely to the comfort and healing of the sick. It was an unfortunate remark.

'Parsons !' he broke out, 'and what do they know about healing ? Why, only last October, when I thought I could leave my people for a night—everybody well, or as near as makes no difference—I got back next day and found a message from old Mrs. Taylor (lives with her chickens in the black-and-white cottage, you know, t'other end of the village). So I went round and found the rector just coming out. (And mark you, I like him ! He's a decent enough sort outside his trade.)

“ ‘ Doctor,’ he said, when he saw me, ‘ I’m afraid she’s dying, but thank God she sent for me.’ ”

“ ‘ Dying ? ’ I said. ‘ She was as lively as a singing cricket two days ago. I suppose she sent for you, when she found I was away.’ ”

‘ I had him there all right, and all he could find to say was, “ Go in and see her, but you’ll find naught but spiritual comfort will help her now ! ” So I went in and had a look at her. She did look bad ; I will say that, but as soon as I examined her, I saw what was the matter. Gallstones, my boy ! Gallstones ! and while I was away, she’d been treating herself for stomach-ache with some filthy quack remedy she kept in her cupboard ; when she got worse, she sent for the parson, and between the two of them the poor old thing was brought so low that it was a wonder she wasn’t dead already. Spiritual comfort for gallstones ! Now that just shows. . . . ’

Croft Ambery showed a parched face to us, scattered with drifts of yellow broom : the grass on its slopes dries up in summer so brown that a fox lying in the bare patches is hardly seen at all. The doctor had fallen silent ; I ventured another remark. This time I hit upon a more fortunate topic ; for my question as to our destination fairly launched him again.

‘ Where are we going ? Why, up Lingen way into these hills to see a poor devil discharged last month from the Infirmary at Hope. Bad he is—rheumatoid arthritis. Got it in the war. They told me he came back with it from the trenches in ’16. Battle of the Somme ; that was when he got it ; in July. Lord, what those fellows went through ! and we old buffers who stayed at home—July ! why, I was about eating my first asparagus then ! There wasn’t another bit picked anywhere in the country that day. Mine’s always a week ahead . . . and mind you, it’s manure that does it ! All last winter from old James’s stables. . . . ’

‘ Yes, yes,’ I said, ‘ but why did they send him home, if he is so bad ? ’

‘ Oh, him ! They sent him home to his wife, because they had done all they could for him, and he will be a cripple all his life. There’s some trouble about his pension. That’s why I’m going all this way to see him. Forms not properly filled up : some damned certificate or other still waiting to be signed. I’ve got it with me here,’ and he tapped his pocket. ‘ But it’s an infernal nuisance, just when I’m so busy. I wanted a quiet afternoon in the garden and I shan’t get it now. For there’s a deal of work

waiting for me at home. Ten miles, if it's a yard, and all to go and see one sick man !'

'Well,' I said carelessly, 'it's all in the day's work, and, I suppose, being so far, you put a bit extra on the bill ?'

He did not answer at once, and when I looked at him, I found his shrewd eyes fixed on me with an expression which I could not fathom.

At last : 'I don't charge him, boy,' he said in surprisingly quiet tones. 'He's been a soldier. . . . Damn it, the road stops here !'

Apparently it did. We had been running up a rough valley road with deep woods on either side ; through the meadows to our left a stream ran, crystal-clear from the hills. The road took a sharp turn through a dilapidated gate into a fold-yard, where it petered out, for there was no sign of it on the further side.

'Ere's where you walks,' said Johnson laconically, stopping the car at the gate. The doctor levered himself out, grumbling profanely at the prospect of a walk. We left Johnson and the car by the roadside and walked up to the farm-house to inquire our way. We found that it lay up a steep little field-path along the skirts of a great wood. The farm-people were vague as to the distance. 'A mile or abouts,' said the farmer's wife ; and her daughter thrust a face red from the washtub round the door and grinned at us.

We set off through a gate into the fields. As we went he told me more about the man whom we were going to see. He lived with his wife (married three years ago, a week before he went to the front) in a little cottage somewhere in front of us at the edge of the wood. He had been under-keeper to the owner of the preserves, but it was doubtful now whether he would not be too crippled to continue in this employment. His job had been kept open for him, while he was away, and his wife left at home to look after the cottage.

'Did she live there all alone for three years ?' I asked.

'So they tell me. A plucky woman she is by all accounts, though so young. Thank the Lord there is somebody dependable to nurse him and look after him and make him well !' The path grew steeper. He stopped and laid his hand upon my arm.

'Now you look there,' he said, turning and pointing down the valley. 'That's a beautiful sight ! You look at those woods. They will be turning soon, but now there's every shade of green in 'em, and other colours besides. What a sight for a painter ! I suppose they seem just green to you. You town-people never

see half the beauties of the country, until they are pointed out to you !'

'I do see,' I said, with some heat. 'I think they are beautiful. Besides I don't live all the time in town. I like the country too.'

But he was not to be denied. 'You spend most of your time in the town, and that blunts your sight. Look there !' and he pointed with his finger ; 'there is a heron to the right of that willow standing on the bank. I'm nearly seventy and I can see it as clear as I can see my own hand, but you would not have seen it, unless I had shown you.'

'I can see it,' I said ; as a matter of fact I had already seen the blue-grey outline of its body and the lighter grey of its neck like a tenuous ribbon against the green of the water-meadow. We moved on again up the path. 'You town-people,' he went on, 'waste yourselves. Lord, what you miss ! You stay three-quarters of your time amongst smoke and bricks, out of the open air, living the kind of life God never intended you to live. How should you see the world as He made it ? and when you do come into the country, you spend most of your time reading books !'

'Well,' I said, stirred to defence, 'there is a lot in books.'

'Nothing,' he retorted, 'but what came out of life. Here's the stuff that goes into books all round you,' and he swept his hand with a large gesture over the countryside, 'and what good have all your books done you, eh ? All that high-falutin' nonsense you were reading last time you were here on your holidays ?'

I had long ago realised that it was useless to try to make him understand the difference between vacations and holidays ; but still I found myself unable to bear with complete indifference his confounding of the undergraduate with the schoolboy.

'I was reading for an examination,' I said shortly.

'Well, and what good has that done ? What was the stuff you were reading ? Philosophy ! Logic !' He stopped and wagged his finger at me, peering shrewdly through his spectacles. 'Philosophy !' he said again, and shook his head. 'Philosophy ! why, look here,' and he bent down and picked a buttercup out of the grass by the side of the path : 'here's all your philosophy in a three-inch treatise, short and sweet and costing nothing ! You think I don't know, but I do, though I have never bothered my head with a lot of trash that comes to nothing when you have waded through it. What is it all about, eh ? The one and the many, isn't it ? That is all it comes to. I get my knowledge from Nature and her facts, and you can't go behind that. The

one and the many. Well, here it all is. Look at this flower, as beautiful a thing as God ever made. That is your one—but take it to pieces, look inside,' and he pulled it slowly petal from petal, 'and here is your many,' he held out the petals in his hand with the air of a conjuror after a successful trick. 'These all went to make up the one; now they are simply parts. Look at this petal and this one. Would not you have made it rounded here and turned the edges here, and so have made it a more perfect little thing? But God hasn't, and so you blame God, who made it as it is to fit into its place in the perfect whole, and yet these fellows quarrel and quarrel over a part here and a part there. Lord, what golden place they would make of the world—out of books!'

'Some of them are only trying to understand it,' I said.

'Understand it?' he snorted with a tremendous scorn, 'the way to understand is to look at the world as God made it, and when you stumble on a snag or a roughness in the path, blame your own blindness and not God's clumsy fingers. For mark me, words won't mend it, but if you look long enough it fits somehow into the perfect plan, as the parts fit the whole. Learn of nature, boy, and don't look for wisdom shut up in books!'

The path now turned a corner and we were walking up a kind of glade with the woods on either hand, and a broad and gentle expanse of meadow lay between. The ground rose more steeply to the top of the glade, where I could see just within the circle of woods a little cottage, standing boldly on its eminence; it was perhaps four hundred yards away.

'I think that must be the cottage,' I said, as we halted again by a plank-bridge, where the path crossed the stream.

'Yes, that will be it,' he said, leaning against the railing of the bridge. 'That will be where he lives, and he will be in the big chair, I should say, downstairs, and his wife at work on his dinner. Now what will he be having, d'you think?'

'A rabbit,' I hazarded, 'if he is a keeper. Yes, I think, a rabbit; or it might be—a pigeon.'

'No. A rabbit likeliest; but who will have caught it for him? I forgot that. For the poor chap is tied to the house. Ah, but I expect his wife is a capable woman, and probably she set a snare last night. I hope she is feeding him well. That's the thing when a man is ill. Feed him! That's what I say: and give him what he likes. I don't believe in your modern diets; a man is the best judge of his own stomach!'

I was looking again at the cottage under the woods. It seemed

to me that something was wrong with it, though I could not at the moment have said exactly what it was. It stood, small and four-square, in the loveliest of positions, set like an eye in the dark circle of forest ; but yet, to my mind, it wore a curious, almost ominous air. I made a movement to walk on, but the doctor laid his hand upon my arm.

‘Just a minute,’ he said. ‘You know, I expect you have been thinking all the time : “what does this doddering old man want to keep stopping for and pointing out the view ?” But you will find, boy, that it’s the same with everyone, when they reach a certain age, and it will be the same with you. Just you notice, when you’re walking with an old man again (especially if it’s up-hill), and you will find him stopping just as I did, and pointing out anything pretty in the neighbourhood or showing you a bird, which, as like as not, you had seen yourself before. But it is not the view or the bird he’s thinking of ; it is his heart and breath, and he’s thinking, perhaps he’s even praying, “Lord, if I were young again, like this young fellow !”

‘Come on ; I’m ready now, but mark me, when you get old, you will not find it pleasant to have nature’s danger-bell planted in your body and have to keep listening for when it rings. That’s the cottage all right. Can you see anyone moving about ? No, you wouldn’t, though. She will be inside, looking after his dinner.’

We were drawing closer now, and suddenly I saw what was wrong with the cottage. There was no smoke coming from the chimney, and the windows seemed to be covered with curtains.

It had a chill look as we approached it. The doctor was still talking, and feeling in his pocket to see if the pension forms which he had come to complete were all there. I could see now that the blinds had been pulled down in all the three windows which faced us, and I began to wonder why. I turned to the doctor and I said : ‘I don’t think there is any smoke coming out of the chimney . . .’

‘Smoke ? No, perhaps not. Then they will be having dinner cold. Cold rabbit, eh ? There’s nothing nicer . . .’

‘And I think,’ I said again, ‘that the blinds are down.’

He stopped and peered intently at the cottage.

‘Why,’ he said ; ‘so they are. Now—what does that mean ? The Infirmary told me he was pretty bad, but not—surely—as bad as all that.’

We quickened our pace. ‘Come on. Come on. I must see to this !’

We were now quite close to the cottage, and its deserted and desolate air increased tenfold. There was no longer any doubt in my mind as to what had happened inside, only an acute pity for the young widow behind the closed and darkening blinds. I looked sideways at the doctor walking quickly with set lips and a frown on his brow. How would the loud voice and manner strike upon her privacy and grief? I began to feel like the spectator of some dreadful accident, of which he is compelled to be the involuntary and helpless witness. I felt even a kind of shame at my companion; he might, I thought, have suited a sick-bed where the sufferer needed stimulus and rousing, but this was death itself.

We halted outside the door, and he knocked boldly. After some minutes the door opened slowly, and the face of a young girl, ravaged like a taken city with weeping, looked out.

I waited for the full sound of the doctor's voice to break the silence; it came.

'Now, my dear,' it said, 'I'm the doctor from Brock, but I am afraid I come too late.'

'He be dead yesternight,' she said, opening the door wide. We entered the ground-floor room, kitchen and parlour in one. There was no fire in the grate and the blind shut out all but thin and gloomy twilight. The girl moved heavily across the room; her shoulders drooped pitifully and her hair hung round her face. I waited in the keenest embarrassment to see what the doctor would do next; her grief seemed to me a thing intimate and sacred, and I felt almost that I was about to witness sacrilege; but no such feelings seemed to embarrass him. He moved briskly forward and drew up the blind. I thought I caught the sound of a little gasp from the girl.

'There,' he said, 'that's better, you can't sit all day in darkness. There is work to be done for you and me, and the room is stuffy, too.' He threw open the window and let in the sunshine and scented summer air. 'We shall have you bad, if we aren't careful, and you must keep well, you know, because there is much to do.'

She made no movement—it seemed she was beyond speech or protest—only she followed his movements with tragic and fascinated eyes. He went up to her and patted her shoulder with a tenderness of which I had not believed him capable. 'There, there!' he soothed her, 'we can't undo what has been done; we must put the best face on it that we can, and now show me the way upstairs. For I must see him, before I sign. You stay here, boy,' he whispered to me, 'I shan't be long.'

He followed her up the stairs. The cottage was so small that I could hear every word spoken in the upper room, and I listened in an amazement, which had in it something of humility. I heard the dull tones of the girl and the loud voice of the doctor. It was the same voice, but where before I had noticed only a somewhat boastful bluster, I now perceived a firm and tender sympathy, an insistent gentleness, the effect of which was heightened in some strange manner by the resolute vigour with which it was offered. I began to judge him anew—there was so much that up to now I had missed; against my will I could not but admire the exquisite tact with which he handled her. I heard her voice growing each minute less dead; gradually (without one false step or blunder) he lifted her out of her despair and forced her to take an interest in what she had to do. A stream of questions, advice, and orders flowed from him: was anyone coming to help her? Yes, her mother was to arrive to-day from Dolyhir in the Welsh hills; the journey by train was long and roundabout; she must have a meal ready when her mother arrived; and what had she eaten that morning? A bit of bread and butter, she answered, 'for food do turn my stomach wi' him lyin' there.' It seemed that she was perilously near to tears, but the great voice arrested her, and incredibly soothed, the while it bullied. She must eat: what had she in the house? She told him, and he made her promise to eat something, after we had gone.

Then he turned to an examination of the body on the bed, and here she completely broke down. She must have thrown herself upon the bed; for I heard him moving and saying, exactly as a skilful rider quiets a restless and frightened horse: 'Now, now, my girl! Come off him; see, you disarrange him, as he lies, and you want them to lay him decent in his coffin, don't you, now? There, there!'

At last it was finished and they came downstairs. The droop was gone from her shoulders, she looked brighter, and very different from the woman who opened the door to us on our arrival. He made her light the fire and begin to prepare herself a meal, and once he even made her laugh, as he knelt himself before the grate blowing the sticks into a blaze.

When the fire was going and the kettle fairly on, we took our leave. My last memory of her is of a face framed in the doorway, pale but tranquil, looking wistfully after us, as she echoed his 'Good-bye, my girl. Keep a stout heart and eat! It's food that makes our troubles lighter. Good-bye. God bless you!' We

walked in silence down the path. It seemed I had been blind before, and now I looked on him with different eyes. I wondered how I could have seen only shrewdness in the face and heard only bluster in the voice. I was angry with myself for having been so dull.

As we crossed the plank-bridge, he turned to take a last look at the cottage. The sunlight struck upon the uncovered windows and flashed cheerfully back to us. The desolate look was gone.

'Lord, Lord ! ' he said, ' that's a thing to make a man humble. To go with your instruments and your knowledge, thinking all the while of the good you are going to do, and then to find that some one greater than you has been before ! We doctors take to motors, because they run quicker than a horse, but death outruns our motors. It's bad enough when he comes in whilst we are there and nothing that we can do will keep him out ; but the worst is when he has been before us. For he makes all our skill seem nothing ; he comes and goes and what he leaves behind is past our mending.

' I go to make a wife and husband happy (like a prince, eh, boy ? with power in my hands), and all that I find to do is to lay a dead man's hands together and try to comfort a broken-hearted widow. Eh, but it goes against me ! I remember years ago, when I was at the hospital, I used to go on Christmas Eve to the children's ward to bring 'em presents and things ; and one year I went, as usual, thinking how pleased they would be and what a fuss they would make of me, and when I got there, I found that the mayor had been half-an-hour before, and he had brought far better presents than mine and had been dressed up in his robes and chains and the Lord-knows-what. It took all the steam out of my little show, the children were thinking all the while of him. So I went away quickly. It made me feel so small, and death, when you come to think of it, ain't unlike the old mayor. For he was nothing to look at when you met him, nor is death, sometimes not more than just a stirring of the air, it is the shadow he leaves that weighs on you. Lord, but it gives my pride a jolt ! ' Thus we came back to the Farm, where the motor was waiting, and Johnson turned her head for home. I settled myself to think upon the events of the morning, and the doctor puffed at his pipe.

' Well,' he said with a sigh ; ' that's over, and now for home and dinner, and I am going to give you a bit of the best beef that is being eaten in England to-day—'

He had apparently recovered his spirits, but it was not his pride only that had received a jolt that morning.

MARTIN GILKES.

DONNINGTON CASTLE

BY P. H. DITCHFIELD, M.A., F.S.A.

THERE are few ancient buildings in England which have such a story to tell as the proud and famous fortress of Donnington. Situate in the south-eastern corner of the Royal county of Berkshire, nigh the old town of Newbury, celebrated for its renowned 'Jack' of that ilk, the great clothier in the reign of Henry VIII, and for its memorable battles fought in the Civil War, this ivy-clad ruin, tall and dignified in its old age, is a monument of valorous defence, unbending loyalty, and imperishable fame. It tells of that indomitable quality of the English character which in spite of overwhelming odds, of countless dangers and disasters, urges our countrymen to hold on to the last possible moment of human endurance, and even to die rather than yield to the foe. There are many such instances of valour recorded in our national annals, such as when the brave Sir Richard Grenville, with his little *Revenge*, withstood the whole might of the galleons of Spain and, 'though his vessel was all but a wreck,' still cried 'Fight on!' We dreaded, perhaps, that in recent years our race, as the Germans believed, should have become feeble and decadent. Vain such unpatriotic fears! With national pride we regard those brave brothers of ours who never quailed in all the fearsome horrors of the fight, and who nobly upheld the reputation of their sires and of the Old Country at Ypres, the Marne, the Somme, Zeebrugge, and in all the battles of the Great War.

In the same way do these battered walls of Donnington administer to the pride of Britain. Never was there a nobler old fortress. It withstood the whole force of the Parliamentary army during the whole course of the great Civil War when 'the gallants of England were up for the King.' Cromwell himself and his 'Invincible Ironsides' tried to pluck this flower of chivalry from the King's guerdon, but the thorns pierced his hands and bade him call off his dogs of war. Donnington was defended by a faithful and determined garrison, commanded by as gallant and brave a leader as ever wore the King's uniform. Colonel Boys, afterwards known as Sir John Boys, was this hero's name. You can read the well-earned tribute to his memory on his monument

in the aisle of a chapel in the chancel of the church of Goodneston-next-Wingham, in the county of Kent, whereon it is stated that his

'military praises will flourish in our Annales as laurels and palmes to overspread his grave. . . . To crown such eminent loyalty and valour ye King royally added to his ancient scutchon a crown. . . . In his 58th year, being discharged from this militant state below he was entertained as we hope in that triumphant state above, October 8th, 1664.'

Skilfully, bravely, and persistently he maintained his trust; and in spite of the crash of falling masonry battered by Cromwell's cannon, though hard pressed at every point, and though often summoned to surrender, he steadfastly refused to betray the trust reposed in him by his sovereign, and yield the castle to the enemy, until all hope for the success of the royal cause had to be abandoned.

To-day the venerable fortress looks quietly down from its hill-top site upon a peaceful scene. The wooded vales of the Kennet and the Lambourne stream, immortalised by 'the silver-tongued Sylvester,' lie below, and one can in fancy people them with Prince Rupert's cavaliers and dare-devil squadrons, or the buff-coated troopers of Lord Essex and Cromwell, and the 'trained bands' of London City. Over there is a field, still called 'Dalbier's Mead,' where Colonel Dalbier made a redoubt and suffered greatly from a sudden sortie of the garrison, who killed eighty persons, took sixty prisoners, besides colours and arms. All the ground around the castle was cut with trenches, redoubts, and earthworks, anticipating the methods of modern warfare, and our men 'went over the top' then, as recently in France and Flanders.

Amidst the venerable elms that now shade the war-worn slope we see the noble old gatehouse, consisting of two towers with the intervening frontage. Part of the north side-wall remains. It was evidently of the Edwardian type of castellated building, and was erected by a great man, Sir Richard de Abberbury, in the reign of Richard II, whose guardian he had been, and who granted him a licence 'to build anew, and fortify with stone and lime, and crenellate a certain castle on his own land at Donnington, Berks.' This was in the year 1385. By that time the old Norman keep with its bailey courts had been banished by military architects; and, as a French writer observed, there was something light, fresh, and laughing about it, not possessed by the heavy massive castles of an earlier century. It consisted, in the days of its grandeur,

of a square enclosure with subordinate towers at the four angles, in addition to those of the gate-house. The western wall, however, was bent outwards, forming a very obtuse angle. It is built of rubble-work of flint and chalk, but its scars and wounds of war are mended with brick. You climb a dignified flight of steps leading to the entrance hall, and mark the grooves and aperture for a portcullis worked from the room above, and the finely groined ceiling. A stone staircase leads to the upper storey and on to the leads, whence you can behold as beautiful a panorama of country as any in Berkshire. Some quaint gargoyle jut out from the roof, and you can easily note the traces of shot marks on the gate-house—evidences of the fearful ordeal of battle through which it has passed, and of the force of the balls fired from 'the cannon and great mortar piece' mounted on a battery, of which the chronicles tell.

But the castle has other and gentler memories. It recalls, if it remembers rightly, the father of English song, the immortal poet, Geoffrey Chaucer. Tradition, which often preserves the truth more accurately than the historical records of the lives and deaths of kings, assures us that the great poet lived and wrote here; and it is not for me to dispute the decrees of Tradition and call her a lying jade and a fallacious chronicler. I will venture to call as a witness a very learned lady, the great Mrs. Montagu of 'Blue-Stocking' fame. Writing from Sandleford Priory, where she was paying a visit in August 1743, to her friend the Duchess of Portland, Mrs. Montagu expressed her intention of

'going and indulging reveries at an old castle where Chaucer made his fairies gambol with as much grace and prettiness as the Muses of old on the hill of Parnassus'—literary ladies in those days were always revelling in classical allusions and summoning the Sacred Nine to their aid in their literary compositions. 'The Castle is on a rising just above Newbury, and commands a pretty view of the country. The prospect is of sufficient extent to let the poetic fancy soar at pleasure among the beauties of nature.'

There is no evidence to show that the learned lady at that date paid her visit to Donnington; but two years later, on July 24, 1745, she wrote another long epistle to the same Duchess, again alluding to her friends the Muses and the font of Helicon, and recording what she saw. She writes as follows :

'One day this week we rode to Chaucer's Castle, where you will suppose we made some verses no doubt, and where they showed me

Chaucer's well. I desired some Helicon hoping thereby to write you a more poetical letter ; but the place having been during the last Civil War besieged, the Muses were frightened away and forbade the spring to flow ; so it is entirely choaked up, and where flourished laurels and bays, grows only uncouth thorns and thistles. Where erst the Muses and the Graces played in the best room of the Castle there are now a few tame partridges ; in short the present owner, having none of the divine enthusiasm of poetry, has turned the Castle to barbarous uses. Above it is a partridge mew ; below a court is kept for paying fines and fees.'

So far the learned lady. We thank her for her evidence. 'Chaucer's Well' is there to this day, and supplies water to the Castle House, a modern residence constructed out of materials taken from the ruins. This well is just above 'Chaucer's Walk,' a shady grove through the wood, leading to Snelsmore Common. It has been known by that name time out of mind. 'Chaucer's Oak' was on the north side of the Castle, where venerable representatives of the 'King's and Queen's Oaks' are still flourishing. Who would wish to silence the tongues of these powerful preachers, or to deny that local tradition is truer than history ? And as we are in the company of learned ladies we might summon to our aid Miss Mary Russell Mitford, who states that 'it is said, upon evidence which appears incontestable, that the father of English poetry, almost of the English language, once gazed from this fair hill and inhabited those massive towers. Godwin, who certainly spared no pains in the investigations, and a host of biographers and antiquaries, assume it as an undoubted fact.' And then the charming writer imagines a friendship springing up between Chaucer in the fourteenth century and her dear old friend John Hughes in the nineteenth, the father of Tom, who lived near by at the Priory, and how the two cronies would have given each other legend for legend, tale for tale, wisdom for wisdom, song for song, jest for jest—a flight of fancy that is rather bewildering.

Dates, however, are stupid, stubborn things and very uncompromising. Chaucer died on October 25, in the year of grace 1400. Now, at that time there are documents in existence which seem to prove that Sir Richard Abberbury and Alice his wife were then living at the Castle, and that they did not sell the property to Thomas Chaucer, the son of the poet,¹ until 1414-15 for 1000 marks

¹ I write advisedly that Thomas Chaucer was the son of Geoffrey. Doubts have been expressed with regard to this, but some years ago there appeared in the *Athenaeum* a proof of the filial connection of Thomas with the poet.

of silver. All this seems incontestable, and very disconcerting to us when we go to Donnington to see 'Chaucer's Well,' and 'Chaucer's Walk,' and perhaps the ghost of the poet himself.

This Thomas Chaucer was a rich man. Poets cannot always leave much wealth to their progeny; but Geoffrey combined his making of poetry with being clerk of the works at Windsor and other royal palaces. His salary was 2*s.* a day, or £36 10*s.* a year—a sum equivalent in modern times to £657. Doubtless he saved something for his son, who married an heiress (Matilda, daughter of Sir John de Burghersh), was knighted and became a great man. He had one child, a daughter named Alice. I seem to see her playing and gathering flowers in the courtyard of the Castle, a fair pretty child, unconscious of the sorrows she was destined to endure. At an early age she was married to Sir John Phelip, who died early. She then became the bride of Thomas de Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, who was soon after killed at the siege of Orleans, fighting against Joan of Arc, and then married William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, her second husband's comrade-in-arms at the famous siege. He was a great favourite at Court, but was afterwards accused of treason. He was advised to escape to France. A ship was ready to take him, but the sailors had their orders and beheaded him on the gunwale of the vessel. Poor Alice, widowed for the third time, lived at the beautiful house at Ewelme many years, and built that fine cluster of buildings, the Church, Hospital, and Free School, we admire so much to-day. She was buried near her parents at Ewelme, and her effigy is hardly surpassed in beauty by any monument in England.

Vain would it be to attempt to record the notable names of those illustrious folk who once held Donnington. Alice's son, John de la Pole, married Elizabeth Plantagenet, sister of Edward IV, but the De la Poles, an ill-starred family, were often addicted to treason and lost their heads and estates. Henry VIII gave Donnington to Charles Brandon, his favourite friend, and created him Duke of Suffolk. His secret marriage with the King's sister, Mary, the widow of Louis XII, nearly got him into trouble, but, happily for him, a reconciliation was effected through the instrumentality of Cardinal Wolsey. Donnington became part of the dower of the Queens of England. Lady Jane Seymour and the Princess Elizabeth held this estate, when deer roamed in the park. I may not follow its descent further, save to note that when the Civil War broke out the Castle was owned by John Packer Esquire.

who was a gentleman of good social position, and it was garrisoned for the King. It was deemed an important post, as it commanded the road from Oxford to Newbury and the Great Bath Road, and, as I have said, the command was given to Captain John Boys. It was first attacked by a Parliamentary army consisting of 3000 or 4000 horse and foot, under the command of General Middleton, on July 29, 1644, who captured a barn at the foot of the hill, and summoned the garrison to surrender, expressing a desire to spare blood. Boys replied with spirit :

'Sir, I am instructed by His Majesty's express commands, and have not yet learned to obey any other than my Sovereign. To spare blood, do as you please, but myself and those who are with me are fully resolved to venture ours in maintaining what we are entrusted with, which is the answer of John Boys, Donnington Castle, July 31, 1644.

Middleton advanced his men, who bore scaling ladders, in three companies ; but the garrison sallied forth, fired the barn in which some of the enemy lay, slew some and took others prisoners. This was too much for the Roundheads, and, after a little courteous correspondence about the burial of the dead and the exchange of wounded prisoners, they withdrew, General Middleton joining the army in the west and leaving Colonel Horton to blockade the castle. He obtained reinforcements, again summoned the governor to surrender, and threatened death to all his soldiers if he did not yield before the following Wednesday. The gallant Boys was not to be intimidated, and replied :

'Sir, neither your new addition of forces, nor your high threatening language, shall deter me, or the rest of these gallant men with me, from our loyalty to our Sovereign ; but we do resolve to maintain this place to the uttermost of our powers, and for the matter of quarter yours may expect the like on Wednesday, or sooner if you please. This is the answer of, Sir, your servant JNO Boys.'

This spirited reply brought the Parliamentary general, the Earl of Manchester, on the scene. How dared this little garrison to hold out in such an outrageous fashion ! He proposed storming the Castle, but his men liked not the task, and in disgust he went back to Reading. The siege continued, and the besiegers had some fairly heavy artillery for those days, and trenches were dug. However, the garrison sallied, and captured arms and much valuable

ammunition. I have handled a curious and treacherous weapon that has been found. It is a short sword with a small pistol in the handle ; so that, if you advanced to meet your foe and began your sword-play, you would greatly astonish him by blowing out his brains by that deadly little weapon. The enemy continued to bombard the fort, firing 1000 rounds in nineteen days ; but the Castle, though groaning, still held out, and the governor replied always to the summons of the foe, ' I will defend it to the last drop of blood.'

King Charles came here and drove away the foe, and took away with him to Oxford certain valuables that had been stored there, including his crown, the great seal, and jewels and treasure that had been consigned to the governor's keeping in this impregnable fortress. Prince Rupert was with the King, who on November 10 bade farewell to the shot-wrecked walls and its bold and brave commander. At length the final siege came in the autumn of 1645. Sir John Boys, then knighted for his bravery, was a thorn in the side of the Roundheads, constantly making raids and troubling them exceedingly. Parliament decided that the castle must be reduced, and Cromwell himself and Colonel Dalbier were entrusted with the task. But Cromwell liked not this ' knotty piece of business,' and went away westward, leaving Dalbier to proceed with the work. He summoned a great army, but even then dared not to attack, and retired to Aldermaston. On his return he found that Boys had made a clean sweep of the houses in the village, so that the colonel had no place wherein to lodge his troops, and the weather was atrocious in that November month, and so he waited till the spring. Boys was always on the alert, waiting for the enemy, making raids, bringing in prisoners, and with a brave heart waiting for the inevitable blow.

In March the investment began. That mortar-piece of Dalbier's wrought havoc on the walls. In spite of sallies the fire became too hot for the garrison. But Boys would not yield without the consent and command of the King. A messenger was sent to Oxford to the King, who replied that he could send no reinforcements, and that the governor was permitted to make the best terms he could. So articles of surrender were drawn up which were extremely honourable and favourable to the men who had made such a gallant defence. They were to march out with all the honours of war, flags flying, drums beating, with their horses and arms, ' lighted matches, bullets in mouth, and bandoliers filled with powder.'

They might go to their own homes and live in peace without any molestation, if they engaged never to take up arms against the Parliament. So closed this remarkable siege, and, as Mr. Walter Money states in his 'Battles of Newbury,' 'perhaps it would be impossible to find a brighter page in the whole history of those civil commotions than that which records the deeds of daring and devotion of this brave cavalier, Sir John Boys.'

On such events as these Donnington Castle broods in its old age, as it looks down upon the scene of sylvan beauty from its lofty hill. It has heard rumours of fights more fearful than that which disturbed its peace nigh three centuries ago, and left it a battered wreck. Khaki-clad warriors, some maimed and wounded, have visited its ivy-mantled towers and told stories of modern warfare that nearly caused its topmost stones to fall and wellnigh broke that aged heart which still beats with pride for British valour and British victories. Set in its peaceful rural scene it knows little of the storms that threaten our beloved land, the England of its love, of industrial strife, or class warring against class; but it knows Shakespeare (for did not Lord Howard of Effingham, a former owner, read the plays to his fair lady, Catherine, when sitting together in an arbour of the garden on summer evenings?) and the lines are not forgotten but bring comfort in its old age:

‘Nought shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true.’

GUNONG RAPAT

BY C. S. DURST.

THEY reached the watershed as the day was drawing to evening. Through a gap in the towering tree trunks the valley spread out beneath them, half sunk in shadow, with here and there a gleam of silver where a glimpse was caught of the river winding below. Beyond it the mountains rose in a jumble of peaks and shoulders, over which was cast as a mantle the eternal green cloak of the jungle, broken only by a single splash of red where a flowering tree burned—the flame of the forest.

James Odell spoke. 'Look,' said he, 'there is old Rapat.'

Yussef, the mandor, looked where he pointed. 'He is angry,' he said; 'he frowns at us.'

A great black cloud had gathered round the crest of the mountain that was their goal: a cloud edged with flame where the low sun struck it. Some strange accident of shape had caught the mandor's eye. It was as though the cloud had features: a great yawning cavern of a mouth, a nose twisted with malignity and, above, two eyes deep sunk in their sockets.

The whole atmosphere was still with the strange tension that precedes a storm. The two men stood gazing out spell-bound as the cloud reared up its crest, growing higher and higher, spreading out great bulbous arms, belling out great puffed cheeks at them.

Behind them the coolies came one by one up the jungle track and, dropping their burdens heavily to the ground, squatted round and pulled out cigarettes.

James Odell turned on them.

'Hurry,' he cried, 'hurry, there is a storm coming. We will camp here.'

The tired men once more got on their feet; there was bustle and the sound of chopping of wood as saplings were felled for tent-poles.

James, working himself with the rest, was suddenly aware of the splash of a great raindrop through the branches. Then the storm broke. Men sought what shelter they could find in the half-rigged tents which the wind whipped and flapped in its fury.

The trees groaned and wailed above them, and darkness descended, obliterating everything save the red ribbons of the lightning.

So Gunong Rapat welcomed the adventurers with the sting of his anger.

The next evening saw their tents pitched on the far side of the river, ready for the steep climb up the slopes of Rapat. The march had been a short one, and camp had been pitched early.

James Odell stood at the opening of his tent taking a last look round before darkness shut down on the scene and the pinging mosquitoes forced him into the shelter of his tent. It was wonderfully beautiful. The broad river rippled over the shallows by which they had passed that afternoon, rippled with a sound as of a hundred children laughing. Above the ford the river flowed deep and still in a long pool reflecting unbroken the tall black trunks of the trees that stood bathing their feet in its waters. Above towered yet other trees, tier upon tier, ridge upon ridge, in a sloping wall of green that broke off in a hard line against the blue depth of the sky. The camp was pitched on a piece of long grass that ran down to the water's edge at the point where the ford crossed the river. In the centre stood a single tall tree surrounded by a clump of bushes, on one side of which stood the white man's tent. The smoke from the fire where the coolies were cooking was borne across to James Odell with the not unpleasant tang of burning wood.

James turned slowly from gazing up-stream and let his eyes wander down the valley. Somewhere on that ridge at which he was looking they had spent the last night, wet and uncomfortable. A shiver ran through him at the very thought. The sun would soon be setting. He turned once more towards his tent, and as he turned he saw a figure standing before him. It had approached him unheard. He started, then recognised it as one of his coolies, an old man, tall for a Malay and thin but wiry, a man whose physique bore the impress of strength beyond the average. He was a coolie who had only joined just before the expedition had started.

'What do you want?' James asked brusquely.

'I am afraid,' said the man.

James knew well that no Malay has scruples of owning to fear, but this sudden apparition and the words he spoke were incongruous.

‘What more?’ he asked.

‘Tuan, I am afraid,’ the man repeated.

There was a silence, while James looked the man slowly up and down.

‘Afraid of what?’ he asked.

‘Mountain,’ the man answered. ‘It is bad.’

‘What is wrong with the mountain?’ asked James.

‘It is bad, Tuan,’ the man answered. ‘The storm last night. It is a bad mountain—I am afraid. There will be disasters. Will not the Tuan turn back?’

‘Turn back,’ echoed James, ‘because we got wet shirts last night! You old fool! Haven’t you ever got wet before that you are afraid of a drop of rain. Go back to the fire and keep your fear to your own belly.’

The man turned and made his way silently round the tree clump, while the white man went into his tent and sat down on the canvas bed.

His boy brought him his evening meal. He ate it in silence. The boy removed the plates, lit a candle, and let down the folds of the mosquito-net. As he left James called to him.

‘Tell Yussef to come here,’ he said.

The boy withdrew, and presently a figure slipped out of the darkness and squatted at the door of the tent.

From the darkness without the white man looked like some great moth as he sat on the bed’s edge. The meshes of the mosquito-net blurred his outline, and as he moved strange exaggerated shadows flitted here and there on it.

‘Tuan,’ the mandor said, ‘what do you want?’

‘Who is that new coolie,’ James asked, ‘the thin old man?’

‘He is Amed,’ Yussef answered. ‘He is from the Ulu, a wild old man; he has lived almost all his life in the jungle.’

‘Is he mad?’ the white man asked.

‘Perhaps,’ was the reply. ‘Why does the Tuan ask?’

‘He came to me this evening,’ said James, ‘with some story that he was afraid to go up Rapat. Have you heard anything of that?’

‘No, Tuan,’ answered the mandor, ‘he is a silent fellow, the other coolies don’t talk to him much.’

‘All right,’ said the white man. ‘See that he doesn’t put his ideas into the heads of the other men.’

The mandor slipped away after a few more words as to

to-morrow's plans, and left the Englishman to blow out the candle, roll himself in his blanket and sleep with the sound of the lapping water crooning in his ears.

It was noon some five days later. The expedition had reached the summit of Rapat without further incident, and the camp had been pitched and made comfortable for a stay of some days. The peak of the mountain was cleared to give a view all round, and the felled trees and fading branches lay in confusion on its slopes. On its highest point the iron survey mark stood up gauntly pointing to a grey sky, and to one side of it were erected the two green tents that sheltered James Odell and his boy. The coolies had their camp pitched some quarter of a mile down the slope of the mountain where a trickling spring burst forth to tumble downwards to the river beneath.

James Odell had been wrestling with a bout of fever all the night before, one of those bouts that suddenly seize the strongest and lay him helpless. But the worst had passed. He stood supporting himself by the tent-pole and looking down the pathway that wound in and out among the fallen trunks. Up it came some dozen men carrying bamboos on their backs—thick bamboos cut into short lengths in such a way that they formed very efficient water-buckets.

‘You are late,’ he cried angrily. ‘Where is Yussef?’

‘Tuan,’ came the reply from half-way down the line.

‘Why are you late?’ he demanded.

The mandor came towards him. ‘Tuan,’ he said, speaking low, ‘there is trouble with the coolies. They are restless. They say there are lights that move in the jungle at night. They would not bring up water to-day, until I made them by force.’

‘They are the sons of pigs,’ said the white man, his anger now in full vent, ‘to be afraid of the will-o’-the-wisps. Give them more work to do and we shall hear less of their fears.’

As he spoke there was a sudden peal of thunder out of the cloud that hung above the mountain. A jagged streak of blinding lightning leaped towards them, and the rain rushed down without warning in a solid wall of water. The coolies fled for shelter into the boy's tent, the nearest covering to hand, while flash after flash swept from heaven to earth ringing the mountain crest in a wall of fire.

A man danced among the wreckage of the trees waving above his head a gleaming parang, the felling knife without which no coolie travels in the jungle. By the glare of the lightning James recognised that it was Amed, the wild man. Swaying this way and that as he leaped from tree trunk to tree trunk, he looked like some fiend begotten of the storm. The sarong, his only garment, soaked by the deluge, clung to his legs and flapped around him. His bare chest shone with the rain.

'Gila!' ejaculated Yussef.

While the word was on his lips, Amed caught a glimpse of the huddled mass of the coolies crouched under the other tent. With a cry that rose even above the crash of the thunder he gave a bound towards them.

'Amok!' cried the mandor, and hurled himself on the madman, gripping at him with his bare hands. Pandemonium was let loose. Cries of 'Amok' arose on all sides. The coolies in terror fled helter-skelter down the path by which they had come. James rushed to the assistance of the mandor, but too late, the deadly parang rose and fell. Yussef with a groan relaxed his hold and rolled over to the ground. A yet more vivid flash of lightning photographed the scene on the white man's retina. The half-naked madman, with fire burning in his eyes, crouched beyond the corpse, his parang held ready across his body. For a full minute the two remained motionless while the thunder roared and rolled among the lowering clouds above.

In that eternity James's memory was etched with every line, every wrinkle of the man's face: the dark gap where two front teeth were broken, the yellow fangs on either side beneath the lip drawn back in a snarl, the froth at the corners of the mouth, and the eyes—the eyes hard as stone, yet in their depths burning with a flame that might burst forth at any moment.

Then it was almost as though an unseen hand had pulled a trigger and released a tautened spring. James had a vision of a black mass of limbs hurtling towards him. He raised his arm instinctively to shield himself. There was a biting sensation in it as though he was seared with a hot iron, he was falling, falling into an abyss of blackness, falling, falling—then he knew no more.

When James Odell came to himself, the storm had rolled away and the sun was burning down on to the glistening raindrops.

He was aware of the fever-ache in every limb and a dizzy sensation in his head. A pain shot through his left arm when he attempted to move it. He sat up and looked around him. A couple of paces away lay Yussef. He crawled to him and touched him ; he was cold. With a determined effort he made his way to his tent, stripped off the light clothes he wore, huddled himself in his blanket, lay down on his bed, and once more became unconscious.

How he endured the next eternity he could never tell. The fever raged through him. His tongue and forehead burned. He was only aware of that and the drumming of rain on the tent. How long he lay thus he had no means of counting. At last one evening he sat up, his head dizzy, his body weak, but with the knowledge that the fever was passed. For some minutes he did not recollect what had occurred. Instinctively he called his boy. There was no answer. Nursing his injured arm, he stood in the doorway of the tent and called once more, 'Mat ! Mat !' His voice seemed to roll out over the tree-tops, but there came no reply. He realised slowly that he was alone. With infinite labour he strapped up his injured limb. Then he sat down to collect his thoughts. The rain had ceased, and the view in the evening light spread out in such peacefulness as to lull all terrors.

He thought very hard. Why had the coolies not returned ? And his boy, what had happened to him ? Food ? he groped his way to the cooking-place and found some tinned food and soaking bread. The former he could not open, the latter he ate ravenously ; he found he was hungry, good ; he felt better for the food.

His eyes wandered over the mass of jumbled hills before him. Miles on miles, miles on miles, the words seemed to form a chant in his brain, ' Miles on miles, miles on miles, miles on miles on miles.' He came to himself with a start—Yes, miles on miles to be traversed alone. But the country smiled at him in the evening light. What harm could happen to him in the midst of such beauty ? Then his thoughts travelled back to the coolies. Why had they deserted him ? Perhaps they had come back and were now in their camp down below. He could not believe that they were not there. He would go down and see next morning. But now he must rest and get strength. He covered up Yussef's body with some sacking, got some more food, managed to light a fire, and settled down for the night.

With the first ray of dawn he was astir. In the greyness that crept over the face of the jungle he made up a small bundle of

food, took his automatic pistol and some ammunition in his pockets and started on the descent. His arm was painful, but he made a rough sling for it. Thank heaven there was no wound. The madman must have hit him blindly with the back of the parang.

As he plunged into the trees it grew dark, dawn had not yet penetrated into their recesses. He stumbled over a tree root, and a sharp twitch of pain warned him that he must go gently. It was not an easy descent, but the track on beyond the camp would be better. He made good progress and in about a quarter of an hour rounded a twist of the path and saw the camp.

It looked very much as usual, though it was too dark to distinguish details, the three coolie covers side by side, the remains of the fire with, beside it, the cooking-pots and bamboo water-vessels. Surely the coolies were inside the tents. He almost expected to hear a deep snore come from them. He was quite close now and stooped down at the entrance to the tents. They were empty. He took a pace on and almost stumbled over something. It was the form of a man. He turned him over with his foot. In the half light he bent over his face and recognised Mat, his boy. There was a gash in the back of the head. Amed had not again made the mistake of using the back of the parang.

Somehow this last sight had been a far greater shock to James than the death of Yussef. One's boy, one's personal servant, is always on a different footing from any coolie or mandor; and Mat had served him so well. The sight of Mat's dead body had awakened him to his loneliness. From the hill-top the night before the country had lain before him like a map, now he was walled in with trees. He suddenly became afraid. He was alone, a solitary human being in all the miles of jungle. He anticipated no harm from the beasts that inhabited the forest. He almost looked on them as friends. No, it was some creeping fear of something more than beasts. He recalled the words of Amed, he was afraid of the mountain, he had prophesied disaster; and Yussef too, he had said the mountain was angry. Was there some evil spirit that brooded on its summit, some elemental that resented intrusion, and with the blast of its wrath overthrew the schemes of man? Why was it that natives never entered the jungle without making some strange offering of betel-nut or rice? He remembered the (stone jutting up at the head of the Jeram Panjang, the rapid where

once he himself had nearly lost his life. He recalled that memorable occasion, and how the boatmen had implored him to put some offering in the hole, how he had laughed, but had slipped in two cents. Was that all superstition? the relic of Nature worship, or was there truth beneath it, overlaid by its grotesqueness?

To return to his camp on the hill-top seemed to him impossible. He realised that he had never meant to return, else why had he taken food with him? Some force was driving him from the hill; he was being expelled. He started off on the track down the hill, thanking heaven it was a downward slope, but the fear of that something was ever at his heels.

That night he slept by the track-side for a few short hours, and before day had fully broken he was once more on his way.

His food supply was not large, but he was not much troubled. The jungle was full of life, and it would go hard with him if he could not knock something down with his pistol.

He strode on. Some monkeys came into the tree-tops above his head and looked down grinning and pointing at him. Here was his chance. He could kill one and so save what rice and bread he had left. He pulled out his pistol and took steady aim at the largest who poked a whiskered face at him. As he fired the monkey gave a sudden movement. There was a cry as though a baby had been hurt. The animal hung for one moment struggling from the branch, then dropped wounded to the ground. James ran forward to seize his prey, but before he could reach the spot the animal stood up nursing its injured paw for all the world as a child would. It stood quite still. James raised his pistol once more and the monkey dropped dead with one convulsive shudder.

A revulsion of feeling swept over the man. It had been so terribly human—the cry, the actions. It was impossible to eat the flesh of anything that behaved thus. He could still see the odd plaintive face gazing at him. He felt that his hands were stained with murder—murder in cold blood—unpardonable. He had some rice and bread left. His hunger was not such as to make him cannibal. He stepped over the dead animal and passed on.

The afternoon brought rain. Clouds once more massed round the mountain-tops and the thunder echoed from their sides, but James comforted himself that he was near the foot of Rapat, that within an hour he would have once more crossed the river and be

quit for ever of that mountain of fate. Beneath the tracery of branches the rain was only felt as great intermittently splashing drops. Within half an hour it stopped as suddenly as it had begun.

James dropped down the last steep descent and before him lay once more in all its beauty the green padang on which his camp had been pitched a week or so before.

It stretched out smooth and peaceful as then, in the centre the clump of bushes by the side of which had been his tent, beyond the river chattered over the pebbles of the ford and sparkled in wavelets in the sun. It seemed to James that this was one of the most beautiful places of the earth. He felt comforted, the horror that had been gripping him throughout his walk through the jungle seemed slipping away. Nothing would harm him in the midst of such beauty.

Then he walked round the clump of bushes and suddenly halted. Facing him, seated on the ground, was Amed.

The man looked straight at him, unmoving, with a stare from which all expression had vanished. Had he stirred hand or foot the spell would have been broken, but he sat motionless, his glassy eyes fixed on the white man.

To James it was the most terrible of meetings. But a minute before he had felt that the world was smiling on him, now he was confronted with this vermin. He felt that he had almost trodden on a sleeping snake. Now he must kill it. He took out his pistol and raised it, but the man moved not an eyelid, merely gazed at him.

Thoughts crowded through James's brain. Here was a man, a murderer, why should he not kill him out of hand? It was a duty he owed himself. His arm was witness to one attempt already on his life which might be repeated, and what would be the result?

The man was in his power. It was like butchery to kill him in cold blood. Had he fired the moment he came round the corner, he would not have felt so.

He dropped his arm. He must be judicial. In the jungle the white man is law. He must wield law in this case.

James sat down where he was, some ten paces from the Malay.

'Listen,' he said to the man, 'I have a pistol here; if you stir hand or foot, I shoot.'

The man was silent.

'Do you know who I am?' asked James, speaking still in Malay.

'You are dead,' came the answer. 'I killed you.'

'Why should you not die for murder?'

The Malay sat where a tent had been pitched. The grass was crushed down in a square patch and a bamboo pole that had supported the tent stood up behind him. Between the Englishman and the Malay was a black patch where the sodden ashes of a fire yet remained with the half-charred butt of a dead branch sticking out from them, to one side the bushes in which birds twittered and a lizard rustled among dead leaves. The storm that had passed lay in heavy rolls of cloud on the mountain-tops.

It was a strange scene on that green sward, four days' journey from the nearest habitation, judge and prisoner seated opposite one another in the green law court of the valley with no witness to the trial but the trees and mountains.

Seated there James was aware more intensely than ever of the strange sensations that had been thronging him the last two days, that there was some power, immense, beyond his comprehension or sight, which pervaded all things, the trees, the river, the grass. He felt almost that he was not judge but prisoner arraigned at the bar of some court outside the power of his senses to understand, arraigned for some crime, he knew not what, and judged by a code of laws that was not the code of humans but of some irresistible elemental power.

Yet he was sitting in judgment on this murderer. James felt that he must prove his case to the hilt, that it was not clear, that he was biased. Common sense was so insistent that the man must die.

How could one travel with such a companion, however tame he now seemed? He had gone amok once, might he not again? How could one sleep knowing that the murderer's hands might at any moment be gripping one's throat? and sleep was what he must have to win through those next four days. Surely it was but common sense and justice to kill the man.

He thrust the thoughts away, yet still more base ones took their place. Food! how could he support a madman on his slender stock of provisions? It would be much wiser to kill him. Why, the very sight of food would probably send him raging to get it. It would be much better that one should survive than that both should perish.

No, such thoughts must be shut away—they *must*. He *must* be just, and such arguments were not justice—not *his* justice;

even though he could not tell with what standard of justice he was being judged in that elemental court he felt every moment arraigning him.

He spoke aloud slowly in English to himself, while the prisoner, not understanding, gazed at him.

‘This man,’ he said, ‘is guilty of murder. With my own eyes I have seen him commit it. With my own eyes I have seen proof of a second crime. He has owned to the attempt on my life; he believes me dead and the ghostly avenger of that crime.’ Before him arose once more the sight of the body of his murdered boy in the gloom of that forest dawn. The very eyes in their fixed stare cried for vengeance. ‘This man is vermin to be slain at sight,’ he muttered.—‘No, that is not justice.—He is a murderer, and whoso sheddeth man’s blood by man shall his blood be shed.’

James glanced down at his pistol held ready by his side, and shuddered. Was it a qualm that shot over him, that he should not do the job neatly? Would he miss and only wound as he wounded the monkey? He shuddered again at the very thought. No, that too must not bias him. He must be just—rigidly just.

He sat silent. The man was guilty, and by the laws of man he must die—the laws of man, yes, but who knows if the laws of man are just? He debated it with himself.

‘Who am I to shed blood?’ he cried at last, and the forest took up the cry on all sides echoing and re-echoing his tones as though carrying his words up to whatever beings were brooding in the mountain-tops. Then silence fell, and suddenly again the air was filled with cries, the cries of birds, disturbed and rising from the tree-tops up-river.

‘We will cross the river,’ said James in Malay to the man.

They both rose and James walked to the bank. He had been too intent on his thoughts to notice a noise up-stream. He still moved as one in a dream. The noise grew louder. His eyes wandered up the river, and suddenly he grew rigid to the spot on which he stood. It was as though a wall of water was bearing down on him. Some temporary dam caused by the wreckage washed down by the rain had broken and was bringing the river down in spate. Thoughts rushed through his brain. Was he judged? Was his sentence to be carried out? He measured the distance to higher ground with his eye; the river was already flooding its banks and the wreckage that foamed on the crest of the spate was drawing near. Above the noise of the thunder of the flood he cried to Amed.

'Get up,' he shouted, 'get up to the high ground.'

The two men ran together through the ever-rising water. Together they climbed the steep slope and turned. Where they had stood but a few moments before was a raging torrent of brown water filled with the wreck of trees borne down from the mountain-sides. The whole gorge of the valley was like a boiling cauldron raging in its impotent wrath at the two human beings above its reach.

James glanced at the Malay. His eyes suddenly kindled as though lit with burning coals. Froth rose to his lips. James half raised his pistol; was the man going amok once more?

Amed raised his hand high above his head. 'Tuan Rapat calls me,' he cried, 'Tuan Rapat, the lord of all mountains. I am coming, Tuan, I am coming.'

James pointed the pistol at the man's heart; his finger wound itself automatically round the trigger. He pressed slowly, with the steady pressure of a sure aim; but before the pistol could speak, he dropped his arm.

'Who am I to shed blood?' he said aloud, and even as he spoke the Malay had vanished up the hill and into the jungle with the speed that only madness can lend to human feet.

James Odell was left alone with the flood roaring beneath him.

Some week later a tattered exhausted European staggered to a Chinese wood-cutter's hut by the side of the main trunk road. His left arm hung in a draggled sling, and as he reached the doorway his knees gave way beneath him, and he fell exhausted to the ground.

So James Odell reached once more the outskirts of civilisation, but of Amed, the madman, no more was heard. He had gone to join his master, the spirit that broods ever on the summit of Gunong Rapat.

HUXLEY AND AGASSIZ: SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.¹

OF the worker in science it is especially true that the work he does, however great, however far-reaching, is speedily absorbed into the general body of his science, and its individuality lost in the very growth of the body scientific to which it has contributed. Name and fame fade into the general remembrance of history, recalled for the most part by busy pioneers of the present as the milestones of past progress, as signposts on the slowly blazed track that has brought him on the adventure of knowledge to the edge of the unknown. Yet, as long as science keeps memory of her strenuous workers, the twin-starred name of Agassiz will keep a radiance of its own. Louis and Alexander Agassiz, father and son, coming from Switzerland to the United States, achieved much both for science at large and for its development in America. But with the same love of science, the same extraordinary ability and thirst for work, their temperaments were radically different. As against his father's buoyant optimism, which recked nothing of the attendant difficulties of his projects, Alexander, possessed of his mother's sensitive and apprehensive character, not only saw clearly the rocks ahead, but had the ability to steer clear of them. Louis was a naturalist of the old school believing in the special creation of species; Alexander, though a cautious speculator, began his career under the Darwinian stimulus. To quote from the 'Life of Alexander Agassiz':

'The elder Agassiz, buoyant and robust, loved appreciation, was fond of teaching, and had a genius for stimulating his students. More especially after his coming to America he was preëminent as a great teacher. Few people can now realise how intense an interest he kindled in science wherever he went in the New World, or how eagerly people of all kinds thronged to his lectures in communities not easily roused to abstract enthusiasms or given to scientific excitement. Alexander, retiring and reserved, had no gift or desire to excite popular interest; he hated notoriety,

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disliked teaching, and while his activities extended over many fields, his intellectual life was devoted to research. The essential difference between the two men may be suggested in the statement that one was temperamentally a great teacher and the other a great investigator.'

Though science was his love—the Rachel for whom he served long years in the world of business—Alexander, through the very success of this worldly work alike in material wealth and in social service, was known to his fellow countrymen rather as a most successful man of business than as one of the leaders of science in America, both as investigator and as organiser. This paradoxical reputation was the sequel to the lesson taught by experience of his father's bold way of starting great schemes without counting the cost or planning out the means. As a consequence, his private life no less than his public work was constantly hampered by financial embarrassments. Clearly, in order to work fully and freely at science, a man ought first to provide himself the wherewithal to live and to finance his work.

The crucial moment in Alexander's career came when at the age of thirty-two he left the superintendence of his father's Museum to put on a working basis some marvellous copper mines out West in which he and his brother-in-law were interested. He had the technical skill, for he had trained as a mining engineer as well as a chemist after his College course; and in previous mining work he had displayed his power of organisation and of managing men.

The southern shores of Lake Superior at that time were as difficult of access in summer as Alaska is now, and in winter were the sport of storms and snow. Here for two years of intense energy and endless perseverance he struggled with the untamed forces of the wilderness, with incapacity among his workers, and jealous enmity of rivals, until finally at much cost to his health, he created, organised, and floated into brilliant success the Calumet and Hecla mines—a venture which, best of all his ventures, was to supply him with ample means for pursuing science, while yet continuing to preside over a great business concern with the far-reaching foresight in business planning and the human sympathy for his thousands of workers which both have their root in a keen and sensitive imagination.

So he fulfilled the words spoken to a friend on the eve of his departure to Michigan. 'I want to make money; it is impossible to be a productive naturalist in this country without money. . . .

If I succeed, I can then get my own papers and drawings printed and help my father at the Museum.'

The Museum was the greatest of Louis Agassiz' creations. When he settled down as a professor at Harvard, he brought with him valuable zoological collections. The College had bought these, but the care and housing of them remained on Agassiz' shoulders, and he was constantly adding to them. Thanks to his infectious enthusiasm, the College provided a small salary for a superintendent; a friend left a large legacy to build the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Thereupon Agassiz performed an unheard-of feat by persuading the State Legislature to add a yet larger public subsidy to this private benefaction. True to his large ideal of what such an institution should be, he proceeded to set up his new building as merely the first corner of a vaster foundation where the future generation should complete a comprehensive home of zoological knowledge and study. It was Alexander Agassiz who, by his own fortune and his own supervision, was to give shape and substance to this scheme as an enduring monument to his father and his father's ideals, which might easily have fallen into oblivion when the driving force of his personality had passed away. Yet museum work was not after his own heart, and the task of administration would curtail his own plans of work. What he wrote in early days was true of him to the last:

'As far as I am concerned personally, the Museum is of very little use to me, as I believe in study *ex natura*, and have but little fancy for closet investigations where you get long Memoirs about animals which have never been seen living or in state of nature by the author.'

When once the tide of fortune had fairly set in, he was enabled again and again to charter a ship and with his own helpers investigate the wealth of marine organisms from the surface to the depths of the sea, reaping a rich harvest of knowledge that bore not only on biological but on geographical and geological problems. One of these was the much debated question of the origin of coral islands, where direct investigation on an extensive scale was so much required. His own investigations in various parts of the Pacific as well as the Florida reefs revealed no signs of the subsidence demanded by Darwin's well-known theory of atolls and barrier reefs. As regards modern coral growths, therefore, he rejected the universality (which Darwin in fact did not claim) and even the

prevalence of Darwin's theory. Equally, he denied the universality of any one theory of coral reefs. In regard, however, to the formation of those tertiary coralline limestones that constitute the core of many atolls and recent coral islands, he had no evidence on which to found a theory.

His first visit to Europe in 1869-70 brought him many friends. While his father's name was an introduction, especially to the older generation of scientific men, his own individuality cemented his friendships. Among those he came to know in England were the veterans Lyell and Darwin, and their circle of allies, Wallace and Hooker, Lubbock and Huxley. Between him and the last, his senior by ten years, though one of the youngest of this circle, a strong mutual regard rapidly sprang up. Letters passed between them from time to time; they saw much of one another when Huxley visited America in 1876, and in turn Agassiz' frequent visits to England were keenly looked forward to. As often happens between men of strong character and high aims, their friendly regard took root at their first contact. Their sympathy was immediate. Nor was it only in intellectual things. Both were men of deep feeling in all the relations of life, and after the crushing blow of his wife's sudden death at the end of 1873, Agassiz could open up his secret heart enough to tell his friend :

' Few young men have reached my age and have attained, as it were, all their ambition might desire, and yet the one thing which I crave for, and which I want to keep me interested in what is going on, is wanting. How gladly I would exchange all that I have for what I have lost. But I will not burden you with my sorrows.'

The first letter in my alas! incomplete collection is dated April 22, 1876. The first part, in reply to an inquiry from Agassiz, recommends a young biologist ' who is well up in the Invertebrates ' as an assistant in the Museum. It continues :

' I am very pleased that you like the Elementary Biology,¹ and I hope some day to show you how I am trying to organise my practical teaching here.

' If Biological instruction is to come to anything we must put it on the same footing as Physics and Chemistry.

¹ 'A Course of Practical Instruction in Elementary Biology,' by Prof. Huxley and Dr. H. N. Martin, 1875. The third edition, edited by Howes and Scott, was published in 1887.

'I am really going to visit the States at last. If nothing intervenes to prevent us, my wife and I go out in the end of July or the beginning of August, returning in the latter part of September, and we shall be delighted to pay your ideal workshop a visit. Best thanks for your very kind invitation. At present my plans are rather vague, but I will let you know when they have taken shape.'

Arriving in New York on August 5, he joined Alexander Agassiz on the 16th at Newport for a visit of several days. Before this he had spent a week with Professor Marsh at New Haven and examined his wonderful collection of fossils from the Tertiary deposits of the Far West, of which he exclaimed : 'I have seen some things which were worth all the journey across.' They revolutionised a subject on which he intended to lecture. For one of the three lectures on Evolution which he had arranged to deliver the following month in New York dealt with the genealogy of the Horse, a subject on which he had already written, basing himself entirely on specimens from the Old World. But the new specimens from the West had led Professor Marsh to the conclusion that the origin of the Horse was to be found in the New World, not the Old. After some hesitation, he laid the whole matter frankly before his friend. Huxley, after four or five days' rigorous examination of the specimens, as frankly gave up his former opinion and made Marsh's conclusions the basis of his lecture, with all the more satisfaction because these specimens for the first time indicated the direct line of descent of an existing animal.

He came to Newport full of admiration for this array of fossils and for the man who had collected them with immense labour and in frequent danger of losing his scalp among the hostile Indians, and it was from Agassiz' house and probably at Agassiz' suggestion that he wrote to Clarence King, first Superintendent of the United States Geological Survey, and a close friend of Agassiz, insisting on the value of the collections and the scientific importance of securing the publication of Marsh's results.

A brief note of October 2, 1879, when Agassiz was passing through London, winds up 'in hopes of soon hearing from or better seeing you.' Another just three years later, again conveys recommendations of a young English man of science for a post Agassiz desires to have filled. Apparently the American newspapers had been speaking of him as meditating another visit to the States under the management of a lecture agent ; the letter concludes :

'Why the newspapers imagine vain things about me, I do not know. I am sorry to say I have never had the slightest prospect of crossing the Atlantic again—and you may depend upon it that if ever I do, it will not be in the towing net of an impresario.'

The next letter, dated November 26, 1882 (?), is in answer to Agassiz' proposal that he should escape from the administrative distractions of London and enter upon a great scientific undertaking in America.

'I received your kind letter a few days ago.

'At first, I confess, I was greatly tempted by the prospect you offer, not pecuniarily, for I doubt whether taking one thing with another it would be an improvement, but because I should like to throw myself into the foundation of a great school.

'My pursuits here are more varied than I could wish, and I sometimes groan that my energies are frittered away.

'But sober reflection has convinced me that it would never do. If my wife and I were ten years younger it might be another matter. But we both of us have begun to feel the English winters when they are at all sharp, and I do not think she could face a Massachusetts climate, whatever I might do. How should I feel, think you, if my brave and loving comrade of seven and twenty years began to suffer from the transfer? Besides, we have children and grandchildren and old friends—not to be replaced, at our time, by new ones.

'So that though there is nothing I should have liked better than to work with you as a colleague in making a great biological school at Harvard, you see it cannot be.'

The next letter has to do with a zoological specimen and the breakdown in health which led to Huxley's resignation of all his official positions, including the Presidency of the Royal Society.

When the specimens brought back from the oceanographical voyage of the *Challenger* were assigned to various naturalists for examination, Huxley had undertaken to report on the rare creature *Spirula*, of which only a single specimen had been obtained. The material for the Memoir being so scanty, Agassiz had kindly lent his own single specimen, obtained on one of the voyages of the *Blake*. But recurrent ill-health had interrupted the work and eventually Huxley handed over his unfinished paper and the material to the Belgian marine biologist, Professor Pelseneer, for completion. Not knowing of his friend's illness, and thinking that the

examination must be completed, Agassiz inquired—I suspect more than once—whether his specimen could not be returned.

‘Filey,
August 22, 1885.

‘If you have ever been prostrated by a disordered liver and the melancholic demoralisation that comes of it, you will be able to forgive—comprendre *c'est pardonner*—my delay in writing to you about *Spirula*, and if not—I am afraid, not. For I do not believe that anyone but a sufferer can understand the idiotic habit of procrastination which is characteristic of affections of this kind, under which I have been trying to bear up against the misery of existence for the last twelve months—and which has led or rather driven me to put off till now what I ought to have done and might just as well have done three months ago when Murray¹ sent me your letter. However, I am picking up here, and as first symptom of the return of volition I send you the two figures I have had done of your specimen, that you may have them copied for your “Blake” book if you wish. I have not dissected the specimen, but I have laid open the mantle because I could not otherwise settle several points of importance. The chief of these was the position of the renal papillae on each side of the anus. The “Challenger” specimen was very much retracted instead of being fully extended as yours is; and I suppose in consequence of this the renal papillae were absolutely invisible, while at the same time there were two apparently natural apertures at the root of the gills. If your specimen had not thrown light on this matter I should have been greatly puzzled.

‘When I return to town at the end of September I hope to have mended so far as to be able to print off the *Spirula* Memoir—when I will return your specimen, which is quite safe.

‘I have retired from all lecturing work, fishery inspection and the like; but for the present retain my connection as Dean, with the beloved at South Kensington.²

‘My colleagues are kind enough to wish me to remain in the chair of the Royal Society, but I am by no means sure that my health will stand it.

‘It is humiliating to have to acknowledge that one is old and used up, and I put off the evil day as long as possible.

‘I hope you are coming over to see us this year, and not at the wrong time, as usually happens with you.’

A further question about *Spirula* introduces the next letter.

¹ Sir John Murray, in charge of the ‘Challenger’ Reports.

² The Royal College of Science.

Huxley had recently returned to London, after a trip to Italy in search of health.

'October, 1885.

' I am not quite sure whether you ask for the locality and depth of the Challenger *Spirula* or your own, so I send both to make sure.

' Challenger : off Banda Island, 360 fathoms, Sept. 29th, 1874.

' Blake : 955 fathoms, Grenada, no latitude or longitude.

' Many thanks for the kind cheery letter you wrote in answer to mine. I hope I am mending, but I am good for very little. You have certainly earned the right to do more work for yourself and I hope you will exercise it. The happiest of all conditions is to be hard at work at what one cares for. Let us know when you are coming through this village. The newspapers have all sorts of absurd reports about me, but I am not going to leave England again in a hurry if I can help it. The Italian climate is a fraud, pure and simple.'

In January 1887 Agassiz paid a flying visit to London. Huxley writes on the 17th :

' I am disgusted that I see so little of you during your brief stay.

' Domestic complications at present prevent me from asking people to meet you, but it would be a great pleasure if you could come and dine with us alone (and no war paint) any day that will suit you.

' I have had to go and speechify, much against my will, about the [Imperial] Institute.¹ The thing is good, and might be great in itself, but it is dead-weighted and I am afraid will come to grief.'

A month later the correspondence is concerned with Mrs. Louis Agassiz' hospitable invitation to his daughter during her forthcoming visit to Boston. Writing from Brighton he says :

' Both my wife and I thank you very heartily for your letter which has relieved us of a world of doubt and difficulties.

' We shall be quite happy in the knowledge that N. is metaphorically under Mrs. Agassiz's wing—and not so remorseful as we ought to be for the trouble we may be giving. . . .

' I go to London on Monday . . . (and) hope I shall have a chance of seeing you before you depart for France. You will find

¹ A meeting was held at the Mansion House on Jan. 12, 1887, when Huxley seconded a resolution moved by Lord Rothschild in favour of establishing the Imperial Institute. His theme was the relation of Industry to science.

a quiet dinner with people very glad to see you Wednesday or Thursday—I do not ask you formally for either, as you will probably have more than enough to do, but if you will let us know you will come either day our hearts will be rejoiced thereby.'

The following year Agassiz was again in London. Huxley, whose health had again driven him out of London, happened to be in town for a day or two on business, and writes on March 28, 1888 :

' Your note reached me late last night. I am very vexed that I am bound to be in Bournemouth this afternoon and I shall thereby lose the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow. We have been staying there for six weeks past as I began to find myself all the worse for four months in London.

' I came up on Thursday mainly for the purpose of check-mating a move towards the establishment of one of those beautiful scientific bureaux which we were talking about when you were last here, and I flatter myself I have pretty well succeeded.

' There are half a dozen things to which I am obliged to attend this morning or I should have been off to Long's Hotel on the chance of finding you. Perhaps I may get round yet, in which case I shall leave this note if you are out.

' I do not suppose we shall be permanently back in town for another fortnight. Will there be any chance of finding you then ?'

Agassiz' reply to this is given in his ' Life,' p. 230. His vigorous denunciation of State-harnessed science as killing all individuality is well worth reading. It might do very well for a beginning, ' but after ten or fifteen years no professor would be anything but a political demagogue '—' satellites of the Director,' of their Department, as had already begun to happen in the case of the geologists and the United States Geological Survey. Something of the same kind, it may be observed, took place in Imperial Germany before the Great War. The professors were not independent of political pressure.

The year 1887 saw a controversy between the then Duke of Argyll and Professor Huxley over the recent recrudescence of pseudo-scientific realism in philosophy. In the course of this the Duke, whose studies in physical science, ever coloured by the metaphysical tinge of his mind, often came into collision with stricter scientific logic, was pleased to draw a lurid picture of the state of the scientific world, where, he declared, a Reign of Terror prevailed, making it a matter of life and death to accept the teachings of Darwinism.

Undeterred by the lively banter with which this statement was received, he subsequently proceeded to adduce, as evidence of this Reign of Terror, the case of Sir John Murray and his new theory of Coral Reefs, in reality most widely discussed, which he asserted had been systematically buried in order to preserve the infallibility of Darwin, who had propounded another theory. This untrue statement was promptly seized upon by a dignitary of the Church as text for a discourse on the immorality of men of science.

Apparently the Duke had got hold of a garbled version of the fact that, as was natural, a scientific friend had bidden Sir John Murray make quite sure of his ground before controverting a theory which seemed so firmly established as Darwin's.

Huxley's clear statement of the facts in the November number of the *Nineteenth Century* was sufficient vindication of the honour of science. And, as indeed was his own practice when he found he had fallen into error, he invited the Duke to withdraw his many unfounded statements. 'The most considerable difference I note among men (he concludes) is not their readiness to fall into error, but in their readiness to acknowledge these inevitable lapses.' Agassiz, however, whose investigations in many localities had led him to conclusions akin to Murray's, hurriedly inferred that his friend had simply been 'taking up the cudgels in favour of Darwin's theory.' So he wrote in a letter to Murray, and so also to Huxley himself, producing the following reply :

'June 19, 1888.

'I have been waiting for the arrival of the "Three Cruises" [of the *Blake*] to thank you for it and for your last letter. The two volumes have just arrived and, child-fashion, I have been looking at the pictures which are a delight in themselves. As for the text, I must wait till I get back the use of my brains, which have struck work for any but the easiest tasks, by reason of the illness of their colleague, the heart.

'We have had hard times ever since last autumn. First my wife was seriously ill, then my poor daughter, Mrs. Collier, died under very sad circumstances; then, six months ago, I must needs get another attack of pleurisy winding up with a dilated heart, which has kept me pretty much on my back for the last two months. I have taken so much Digitalis, I shall be afraid to look a foxglove in the face. However, I have now mended enough to travel, and we are off to the Engadine on Saturday. I am told that I have every chance of recovery as there is no valvular disease—but when Dame Nature gives a man of 63 little hints of this kind, the prob-

abilities are he had better take them and be quiet henceforward. I have a perfect horror of not knowing when to leave off.

‘Apropos of the coral reef theory, I beg you to believe that I had not the slightest intention of posing as a defender of Darwin’s views in the article to which you refer. My purpose was to deal with the Duke of Argyll’s abominable misrepresentations and charges against the honour of scientific men, and I did not want to diminish the force of my blows by raising any side issues.

‘It has been my intention ever since to go into the whole question carefully, but I have been unable (and indeed forbidden) to do anything but amuse myself.

‘I have eaten my own leek pretty handsomely ; and I have no notion of letting my friend’s leek escape mastication. Science must be kept free of all partisanship, unless she wants to sink to the level of Theology. *A bas* creeds, Darwinian or others.

‘I have been off the Council of the Royal Society for a long time now, and away from London for the greater part of the past year. I am very much afraid that my suggestion [*i.e.* as to the proposal for federation with colonial scientific societies] will come to nought in spite of the efforts made in its favour by Foster, Evans and other members of the Council. I do not profess to see the weight of the difficulties and objections which I hear have been raised—and, quite apart from any personal reasons, I think it will be very unfortunate if the Society does nothing. But I fear that will be the upshot of the whole business. “*Nolumus leges Angliae mutari*” is the expression of a spirit which pervades all things English.

‘However, I have been so completely out of the world for the last year that you must not take my view of the case for more than it is worth.

‘My wife and daughter join with me in kindest regards and remembrances. I wish you well through all your work and abstain from envying your vigour to the best of my ability.

‘P.S.—This is the longest letter I have written these two months. I do not know whether you are as much to be congratulated as I am on the fact !

Two summer visits to the Engadine had a most rejuvenating effect. The famous physician, Sir Henry Thompson, meeting him in that high Alpine valley, scoffed at the idea of his ever having had a dilated heart. He returned with zest to philosophical and critical work, though, except for light botanical work on the Gentians, standing or stooping over the microscope remained impossible. More than a year and a half has elapsed since the preceding letter was written ; a new spirit is perceptible.

* London,
February 9, 1890.

'I am very sorry to hear of your severe illness and trust you are now well through it and yourself again.

'It is very kind of you to have thought about [a young relative visiting the United States]. I did not give him letters to any of my scientific friends because, old as I am, my conscience is not fully seared, and I did not see why they should be bothered about business which no laxity of interpretation could make scientific.

'He has met with the greatest kindness on all sides. . . . Apart from personal prejudice he is a very good fellow—and so is his wife (fellow is epicene or ought to be). I am sure you will like both of them, and I shall be very grateful for any kindness you can show them.

'I saw to the packing up and sending in the way you directed of the *Spirula* the day before yesterday. I hope it will reach you safely. Many thanks for it—and apologies for the length of time it has been kept. I have no hope of finishing the Memoir now. The illness and constant absence from England of the last three years have done for me so far as work of that sort is concerned. I cannot live more than a week at a time in London, nor undertake work that involves serious labour. So long as I am at Eastbourne (where I am setting up a cottage) walking six or seven miles a day over the Downs and living the life of a hermit, I get along very well. I can write a couple of hours, or maybe three, about topics that interest or amuse me (whence a variety of articles you may sometimes see), but as for anything like investigation and genuine hard work—it is not in me.

'I met one of our Bishops the other day who observed in a sneery sort of way that I had taken to Theology. Yes, I said, you know that I have been ill and I am not up to Science yet. That is really the state of the case. However, I have nothing to grumble at. Three years ago I thought myself doomed to invalidism, pure and simple, for the rest of my life.'

Some months later Agassiz was invited by the United States Fish Commissioner to take charge of a deep-sea expedition off Panama, in the Commission's own ship, the *Albatross*, which was specially equipped for scientific work.

* Eastbourne,
December 11, 1890.

'I am delighted to hear that you are going to start on a new cruise under such good auspices.

'What a lot of solid good facts you are sure to bring back from the new ground. I wish that the old beast *Anno Domini* did not

prevent me from volunteering under your orders! I had a short spell of ship life again going to the Canaries and Madeira with my younger son—who had been greatly pulled down by influenza—last spring, and enjoyed it thoroughly. There must be a strong spice of the vagabond in me; and as I found I could ride for 8 or 9 hours over roads as wonderful as those in the Highlands “before they were made,” as the Irishman said, I don’t think there can be much beyond the said *A.D.* wrong with me.

‘We have settled here within the last week—no, Saturday week we came on. The cottage answers extremely well, and there is a modest guest-chamber which I consider you pledged to occupy on your next visit to England. . . .

‘This is the day of political surprises on our side too. The Parnell catastrophe is the most dramatic local or English affair for a long time. We Unionists say “When thieves fall out, honest men come by their own.” It has smashed up the G.O.M. politically, anyhow, and that is a mercy.

‘I am in the thick of a row—trying to put a spoke in the wheel of the “General” of the Salvation Army—and the spoke is put in, but whether it will drag sufficiently to stop the swindling, I can’t say.’

His share in this, afterwards published under the title of ‘Social Diseases and Worse Remedies,’ is described in the ‘Life’ (vol. iii. p. 176). Suffice it to say that being asked by a wealthy friend what was his opinion of Mr. Booth’s scheme set forth in ‘Darkest England,’ and whether it was likely to be properly carried out, he found on investigation serious flaws in the scheme, with the prospect of vast funds being vested in the power of an irresponsible autocrat. Exposure of these irregularities was followed by revelations from within of the tyranny and espionage rampant in the Army. There was a great turmoil; the scheme was ultimately amended, and enthusiasts were found to hail the critic as a divinely appointed cleanser of the organisation.

The concluding wishes of the letter that Agassiz might ‘be fully set up and have a fruitful cruise’ were happily fulfilled, and in his fifty-seventh year this indomitable explorer of the ocean, whose longest voyages were still to come, gave a good account of himself, and received a lively letter in reply.

‘Barmouth, Wales,
‘August 29, 1892.

‘We have been wandering about ever since the end of July—mostly in Wales. The next time you come over you ought to make

a pilgrimage. Hard by, there are some of the loveliest bits of scenery in the three kingdoms. I knew North Wales and South Wales before, but not this middle bit.

'Your account of yourself is delightful—you seem to have got a new handle and a new blade with no detriment whatever to the identity of the original Agassiz. I shall look out for you from Beachy Head. If you have, say, three *Pluteus* larvae natant on your burgee, you need not be afraid of your yacht being mistaken for anybody else's. I am sorry to say there is no harbour within twenty miles of Eastbourne, but come and report yourself at our cottage where we shall rejoice to put you up—you must. Gardening is my chief pursuit. I know nothing about it, and so have to put on swaggering airs in order to escape being crushed by my gardener.

'However, I am great at watering and nailing up—and not more than two, out of three dubious things I weed out, have been other than weeds up to this time.

'H.M.'s Government that went out the other day—being conservative and churchy—has astonished the world in general, and myself particularly, by making me into a Privy Councillor.

'It is really a very interesting event. Twenty years ago they would as soon have made the devil himself a Right Honourable. Indeed sooner; because he is highly conservative and a witness to Christian verities. We are decidedly getting on—especially on the Tory side, which is always really more liberal than the other.'

It seems to have been in 1893 that Agassiz managed to pay his friends a visit at their home in Eastbourne, but the dates on my copies of the letters, letters so hard, often, to decipher, are obviously wrong.

'We are delighted to hear that there is a chance of seeing you and only grieve that you can give us so little of your time—and that at the end of a long journey—at any rate, for Britishers. . . .

'Send me a telegram overnight or first thing in the morning when you will come, and the best obtainable representative of the fatted calf shall be killed for you.'

The visit was greatly enjoyed by both friends, and as a memento Agassiz begged for a photograph of his host. But there was one omission in the transaction which Huxley hastened to rectify.

'I hear from the photographers that they will not be able to send you the portrait I promised before next week. I do not know where you may be by that time, so will you be so kind as to write to these people, W. S. Downey, 57 Ebury Street, Eaton

Square, and tell them what to do, in case you are leaving before they send it? I quite forgot to drive a bargain with you—and insist upon an exchange of a really good photograph of yourself.'

The last of the series is in answer to Agassiz' of December 24, 1893, which is printed in the 'Life' (p. 299), and which I reproduce here:

"Cambridge,
December 24, 1893.

'The old year is so far gone that I must not forget to send you my best wishes for the new. I am trying the experiment of staying at home this winter and putting my affairs to rights, which have got badly mixed from my frequent and prolonged absences. I hope the doctor will let me remain here, but I fear some fine morning he will pounce upon me and ship me South. I hoped this winter to continue my explorations of the coral reefs of the West Indies, and my experiments on the bathymetrical distribution of the surface fauna. I don't believe a word of all the pretty theories my German friends have. It's very strange how they always manage to find something at any depth they wish. My machinery never works that way, and as I have tried a hundred times to their once, I feel naturally very sceptical. But my scheme could not be managed this year—no yacht to be had.

'My Bahamas notes are now well written out, and I hope to get out this first contribution to the history of the West Indian coral reefs during the summer. It is becoming very evident that the whole theory is pretty complicated, and coral reefs have done far less work than they have been credited with, at least in the Bahamas.

'My reports on the *Albatross* Expedition of 1891 are making fine progress, and I hope to get out this year ('94) the Holothurians and the Crustaceans. Both these Memoirs will have coloured plates, giving a good idea of the looks of many of these deep-sea beasts. Dr. Pelseneer wrote me the other day to ask for the Blake *Spirula* which you sent back, and for the life of me it cannot be found, it has been so admirably put away!—by some zealous person too orderly inclined.

'My youngest son has managed to become engaged to a very charming girl from Philadelphia. I am somewhat taken aback; not having had any experience with daughters, I hardly know how to behave. So far, it's a very delightful experience.'

"Eastbourne,
January 9, 1894.

'MY DEAR AGASSIZ,—If I were not the most procrastinating creature in the world, especially in the matter of correspondence,

our letters would have crossed. I had quite a friendly glow over the intention of writing to you a fortnight ago! I do not like to hear of your health interfering with staying where you please, but if you have to go South it will at any rate be good for science. I am sure you are right in looking at the reef problem as a much more complex affair than most suppose—still righter in looking for help to more observation. It is so easy to sit on one's hinder end and speculate—and with all their good qualities our Teutonic brethren are full largely provided with that kind of *sitz-fleisch*.

'How enviably you go on working! As for me, I have to content myself with sweeping up the fragments into Collected Essays and that sort of thing.

'Our dear old friend Tyndall's death has been a great blow to us—and the manner of it has made it all the more grievous. A more utterly devoted wife never lived—an admirable woman in every way—and the fate never inflicted a more unjust blow than that which she has suffered.¹

'I have written an article in *The Nineteenth Century* which is not meant for a panegyric but for true scientific truth about my friend.

'I congratulate you on your prospect of a daughter-in-law. I have experience of two, and I assure you they are delightful inventions—just daughters with a difference.

'Moreover, as you have only sons, they are indispensable preliminaries to grandfatherhood—which you will find extremely entertaining, if your grandchildren are as droll as mine. One of these young persons (aged three years) came to pay us a visit the other day. At lunch—the first meal of her arrival—she fixed her big grey eyes on me, in silence, for some time, and then coolly remarked, "Well, you're the curioudest old man I ever seen."

'P.S.—If I dare I will go to Oxford, and if you are there the temptation will be $\times 100$. But I get done for with public functions.'

The postscript refers to the forthcoming meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which took place on August 8. This meeting Huxley managed to attend. There was a special piquancy in the situation, for Oxford, the last time the Association met there in 1860, was the scene of his famous passage of arms with the Bishop of Oxford, who had denounced and scoffed at Darwin's evolutionary theory. Now, thirty-four years later, it fell to him to second the vote of thanks to the Marquis of Salisbury, President of the Association and Chancellor of the University, for his presidential address, in which, with whatever reservations

¹ It was her hand that unwittingly administered the wrong medicine to him.

as to its scope, the doctrine of Evolution was 'enunciated as a matter of course—disputed by no reasonable man.'

At this, his last public appearance but one, Agassiz was not present, as he had hoped to be. His doctor forbade him to go abroad that summer. But America was particularly represented by Huxley's old pupil, Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, who in his 'Memorial Tribute to Thomas H. Huxley' has set down a brilliant description of the scene.

With this letter the correspondence ends. Huxley lived less than a year longer; Agassiz survived till 1910, dying in mid-Atlantic on his way home from Europe. As is written elsewhere, 'Fittingly upon the ocean, in whose mysteries he had so deeply delved, his mother Nature whispered to him her great secret, and led him peacefully and painlessly into the unknown.'

LEONARD HUXLEY.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE Editor of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is first opened.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 7.

(*The Third of the Series.*)

'The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.'

1. 'Hail to the great —— !
Hail to the hill-tops seven !'
2. 'Up he rose with angry gesture,
Quivering in each nerve and fibre,
Clashing all his plates of armor,
Gleaming bright with all his war-paint.'
3. 'For a brass plate upon a door
What think you of —— ?'
4. 'A Roman general, flushed with a recent
victory over the ——, or laden with
Carthaginian spoil.'
5. 'My heart is light, and shall be evermore;
Now will I smite faster than I did before.'
6. 'His ways were primitive; and as to dressing,
His toilet was a —— pretence.'
7. 'Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face
— lay.'

RULES.

- Only one answer may be sent to each light.
- Every correct light and upright will score one point.
- With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed above 'Book Notes' on a later page.
- At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back. It is unnecessary to copy the quotations or to send references; solvers who do so must not write them on the same paper as their answers.
- Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
- Answers to Acrostic No. 7 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than September 20.

POEM: *Southey, The Inchcape Rock; and God's Judgment on a Wicked Bishop*

LIGHTS:

- Hood, *Ruth*.
- Calverley, *Gemini and Virgo*.
- Tennyson, *The Lady of Shalott*.
- Campbell, *The Parrot*.
- Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing*, ii. 1.

ANSWER TO NO. 6.

1.	R	ut	H
2.	A	nn	A
3.	L	ancelo	T
4.	P	arro	T
5.	H	er	O

Acrostic No. 5, 'Galahad Geraint': Correct answers were received from 198 solvers, and incorrect ones from 52 solvers. Besides these, there was one answer without a coupon, there was one with no pseudonym, and there were six that did not conform to the last sentence of Rule 4. Most of the failures were caused by the fourth and fifth lights.

The monthly prize of books is won by 'Severn,' Miss L. M. Fielding, Broadsground, Upton St. Leonards, Gloucester.

Solvers are requested to abstain from flimsy paper and every form of paper-fastener. The coupon need not be attached.

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